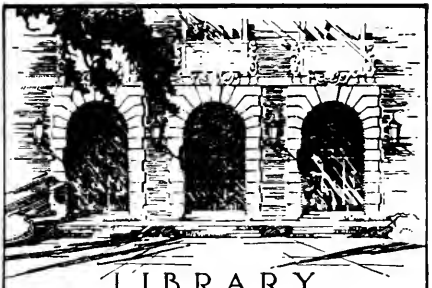

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THE

SONS OF THE VISCOUNT,

AND THE

DAUGHTERS OF THE EARL.

VOL. IV.

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1814

THE

SONS OF THE VISCOUNT,

AND THE

DAUGHTERS OF THE EARL,

A NOVEL.

DEPICTING RECENT SCENES IN FASHIONABLE LIFE

BY A LADY.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. IV.

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THE

SONS OF THE VISCOUNT,

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DAUGHTERS OF THE EARL.

CHAPTER I.

LORD DESMOND on his return to the Castle was too soon informed of the disagreeable intelligence which awaited him. The tenderness of his cousin softened the blow; but it was nevertheless a severe one, and required all the affection and sweetness of such a comforter as Lady Angeline to restore him to any thing like composure. With difficulty he joined the family at dinner, and forced himself to swallow something, lest he should alarm the watchful kindness of his mother. Unable to remain after the ladies had withdrawn, he quitted

the dining-parlour, and calling to Lady Angeline, invited her to be his companion. She therefore quitted the chamber of Lady Mary, and the sweet occupation of a nurse, to join her half-distracted cousin.

"My dear Angeline," said he, in a voice of despair, as he led her to the lake, and unfastened the pleasure-boat, "what comfort is there for me, since I shall no longer be able to pour out all my soul at the feet of Cecil? Oh, my mother, thy cruel destiny pursues thy guiltless son! Even the nephew of Lord De Courci must suffer for one fault of his: I cannot, will not exist, if I am to be deprived of Cecil." He leapt into the boat: Lady Angeline followed. She could neither remonstrate, nor forsake him in the hour of his distress. Boldly he steered it to the Abbey grounds; then drew out his flagellet, hoping that Miss Fortescue would hear its tones, and, if possible, steal a moment to bestow on him one word of consolation.

"My dearest Robert!" said his cousin, with a tenderness of voice and manner that affected him: "my dear Robert, what can

you hope by thus imprudently throwing yourself on the notice of the Viscount's family? Think, should he see you thus close to his grounds."

"It matters not to me. If Cecil's beloved presence is denied me, I care not what may happen, what may become of me."

"Oh! my dearest cousin, return, I beseech you: I see some one on the little seat. It is Henry Fortescue. Return, return, I conjure you."

"Her brother!" exclaimed his lordship, while his eyes sparkled as the boat came full in view of the seat. He stayed its course, and rose: Henry rose also. Lady Angeline, trembling with fear, could only grasp the hand of her cousin. "Do not be alarmed, my love," said his lordship. "I must speak with Mr. Fortescue, if he will honour me with a few minutes of his time."

Henry came forward to the edge of the lake: Lady Angeline covered her face with her hands, while Lord Desmond, with all his mother's graceful manners, apologized for his intrusion, but acknowledged that the distress of his mind would not admit of

ceremony; that he had loved Miss Fortescue from the day he had first beheld her; that his affection had increased at every interview; and that unless Henry would aid him in allowing them sometimes to meet, he felt that life would be insupportable.

"All that I ask," continued the distracted lover of Cecil, "is to be permitted, Sir, in your presence, if you wish it, to see your adored sister. Do not refuse me, I conjure you—my despair may prove fatal to me."

Henry affectionately pressed the hand of Lord Desmond: "Be calm, my lord, be less agitated. I cannot answer you, unless you promise to be more rational."

"I will be every thing you wish me, say but that you will allow me to see your sister, to speak to her for only five minutes."

"I dare not," mildly replied her brother. "You forget, my lord, that I have a father—a father to whom I am accountable next to Heaven: you forget also, my lord, that even now I am infringing on his commands."

"Oh, you have never loved!" passionately exclaimed the son of Lady Emma:

" you have never loved, if you can reason thus coolly upon the subject."

Henry instinctively cast a look towards the lovely cousin of the young lord, but her countenance was hid—a deep sigh escaped him.

" Angeline!" said Lord Desmond, in a tone of desperation, and catching her hands from her pale face, " plead for me, for you can never plead in vain. Oh, tell this cruel, yet dear brother of my Cecil, all that I have suffered on her account: tell him that I cannot, will not exist without her."

He flung himself on the bench of the boat: it heaved on one side; and his cousin in an agony of fear would have fallen overboard, had not Henry's presence of mind preserved her. What a situation for one who loved with all Lord Desmond's fondness, though not his rashness. He was now in the same boat with Lady Angeline: his arms even supported her almost lifeless form: her head rested on his shoulder, and her sweet breath passed across his cheek. Henry trembled nearly as much as the lovely girl he held. Recovering in some

degree from her alarm, she cast her eyes on the figure of Lord Desmond, still extended on the bench; then on Henry, and burst into tears.

"Heaven direct me!" exclaimed the brother of Cecil: "oh, Lady Angeline, you pity your cousin, while I am equally deserving your commiseration! How can I dry those tears! how can I calm the tortures of Lord Desmond, and yet obey my father!" She withdrew her hand. "Ah! you are offended with me, I see, and I must fly, or I am lost."

"And can you quit my unhappy cousin?" said her ladyship. "Can you abandon him to desperation? Can you consign him to misery without a sigh? Ah! I see you indeed possess the stern heart of the Viscount."

She moved towards Lord Desmond: she bent over him: she pressed her lips to his cold damp face—her tears, her sobs, alone possessed the power to reanimate him. He groaned as again he felt the pressure of her lips to his. What a scene for Henry! How did he envy the miserable Desmond!

How bitterly did he feel at that moment that he was a Fortescue! Involuntarily he took the hand of Lord Desmond, who now, recovering from his trance, opened his eyes on Henry and his weeping cousin.

"Hear me, I conjure you, my dear lord," said the son of the Viscount, while his own emotions made him scarcely audible: "listen to the voice of one who feels for you more than he can utter. My vow made to my revered father binds my actions, but cannot fetter my heart, or its affections. All that I dare do for you, I will, but that is but little. I cannot assist your love, my lord, but I will not restrict it: I cannot countenance it, but I will be silent. If you can find means to hold any intercourse with my sister, and Lady Angeline is your companion, I will not betray you—more I dare not promise. You are dear to me, my lord: you would be dear to my father, did he but know you. Time will perhaps discover to you my real sentiments; you may then, my lord, feel for me. Like yourself, I am an innocent sufferer: but not like you, my dear lord, do

I make every feeling, every duty yield to love."

"Oh, pardon my rashness!" hastily replied the son of Lady Emma. "I ought to have known and reverenced a man whom I have been taught to consider as a superior being. Let us at least embrace, let us once taste the delights of friendship. The brother of Cecil has a double claim to my regard."

Henry with affectionate warmth returned the embrace of his lordship. "I will not insult you, my lord, so much as to advise you to overcome your attachment for my sister. I feel that a pure, a real passion, can cease only with our existence. You have my sincere regard, you have my best wishes, my prayers, though I fear they will be vain, for time to soften the asperity of the Viscount. Perhaps, though I hardly dare propose it, were your beloved mother to plead herself, the heart of my father would yield to her strong claim to his lenity and tenderness. I know not what has made me start the idea. Remember, my dearest lord, that I only promise not to thwart

your plans: I will not, dare not, either assist or be privy to them. Farewell!" said he, grasping the hand of his lordship: "duty alone prevents me from being all you wish. I have offended you, Lady Angeline, I fear, past all hope of forgiveness. Alas! you know not my heart."

Saying this, he sprang from the boat, and flew into the thickest of the shrubbery to conceal his feelings. Slowly the boat returned to the Castle. Lord Desmond allowed himself to hope he should be able to devise some scheme which would enable him to see Miss Fortescue, while Lady Angeline's heart fluttered with a strange and hitherto unknown delight. The words, the manner of Henry, sunk deep into her mind: he had owned himself an equal sufferer with Lord Desmond. Was it possible the Viscount had cause to nourish resentment for any other family than her own? Surely not. And yet how vain, how presumptuous for her to suppose that she was in any way connected with the secret uneasiness of Henry Fortescue! She could, however, no longer refuse to own to herself

that she preferred this too obedient son of her enemy to all the world. Unwilling to yield to the tenderness which his idea excited, she turned her thoughts upon the melancholy state of her cousin, and determined, if possible, to be of service to him. She therefore rang for her maid, and requested that Mrs. Meynel would attend her.

When the faithful confidant of her aunt appeared, Lady Angeline asked her if she would kindly take charge of a note for Miss Fortescue, and entrust it to the care of Mrs. Thomson to deliver it. "Tell her from me," said her ladyship, "that she will render me an essential service, if she will have the goodness to give it to Miss Fortescue when she is alone, and if she will also take care of the answer, and send it to you."

Phœbe, who dearly loved Lady Angeline, knew not how to refuse; and yet she feared, lest her young master was more concerned in the correspondence than her ladyship. She nevertheless promised to call next morning at the Abbey, and, if possible, bring back the reply of Miss Fortescue.

Elated by the hope of bestowing peace to the wounded mind of her cousin, her ladyship joined the family-party in the drawing-room. "Why, what have you been doing to Robert?" inquired her uncle: "he looks as woe begone as if he had been crossed in love. But how is it, my dear girl, that you are not on the lake this evening? Captain Evelyn will be very glad, I am certain, to be of your party. What say you, Angeline: is it too late?"

"I think so, my dear uncle," she replied, colouring deeply as she spoke: "to-morrow, at an earlier hour, I shall be happy to contribute to Captain Evelyn's amusement."

The young soldier bowed gracefully, and with all the gallantry of his profession raised the soft hand of her ladyship to his lips. He was the favourite brother of Lady Mary, and had been the confidant of Lord Reginald's attachment for his sister: he was likewise the acknowledged protegée of the Earl, who had first presented him with his commission, and who had lately bought

him a captaincy in the Horse Guards. Tall, and equally handsome as his sister, with manners insinuating and persuasive, George Evelyn was a general favourite amongst the women, who all courted his society. The rank to which his sister was now raised, together with the affectionate liberality of the Earl, contributed to render vain a young man in other respects amiable. He reflected that the beauty of Lady Mary had been the principal cause of her elevation, and his glass told him that the general attention he received from the fair sex was owing to the striking resemblance he bore his sister. In fact, he went by the name of the handsome George Evelyn, and could not help sometimes persuading himself that his person would be the ladder by which, like his sister, he should ascend to greatness.

Captain Evelyn would have been an admirable companion to Lady Elvira, but the timid nature of her sister shrunk from every appearance of boldness, or freedom of manners; and a few hours convinced her that the handsome soldier, so much talked of

by her own sex, and envied by his, would never be tolerated by her, except as the brother of her friend.

Lord Desmond heard with indescribable delight the opportunity which now appeared of conveying his sentiments to the lovely daughter of the Viscount. He retired early, that he might indulge the luxury of addressing her. All that a heart filled alone with one object, and doating on that object to distraction could suggest, was now expressed by his lordship. Love made him truly eloquent: he recounted the meeting with her youngest brother, and the promise which his sufferings had extorted from the sympathizing Henry. He conjured her to appoint some place where they might meet, either in the Park or at one of the tenant's cottages; and concluded by assuring her, that unless he could enjoy her society, life would become a burthen.

Lady Angeline took the letter of her cousin, and enclosed it in an envelop of her own, which contained a few lines expressive of her affection and solicitude for their mutual happiness; then gave it to the care

of Mrs. Meynel, who, after she had assisted her lady to dress for the morning, hastened to the venerable mansion of Lord Fortescue.

Mrs. Thomson, who was goodnature itself, immediately consented to the request of her old friend.—"Ah!" said she, sighing, "you know not the pleasure I feel in obeying a wish of that sweet creature's: I am sure I would give the world had I the means of bringing about a reconciliation of the two families. I as much thought that I should have seen Lady Elvira the wife of Mr. Sidney, as that I hold this letter in my hand. Well, well, all may yet be for the best: I'll go and look for my young lady."

Mrs. Thomson found Miss Fortescue, fortunately, alone in her own room, and presented the welcome letter from the Castle, saying: "If you please to ring three times, Madam, when you have got the answer ready, I'll come, and give it safe to Mrs. Meynel."

Cecil hastily broke the seal: the blood tinged her cheeks as she read the tender sentiments of her lover; while the tears

gushed into her eyes as she remembered her inability to comply with his wishes. Trembling she sat down to reply to her affectionate friend, the generous Lady Angeline, not daring to trust herself to answer the entreaties of Lord Desmond.

"Tell him," said she in one part of her letter, "that I dare not yield to his desires. Already have I hazarded the dreaded displeasure of the Viscount. To attempt an interview, either in the Park or at some cottage, might lead to a discovery, and end in the ruin of our hopes. Tell him, my sweet friend (for who like yourself possesses the power to soften the bitterness of disappointment), that I have not courage to reply to his letter, to deny his request; but that I entreat of you, dearest Angeline, to convince our beloved Robert of the propriety of my refusal. Tell him also, that it may afford him some consolation, to hear that his distress, his sufferings, cannot exceed mine. Oh! my friend, I know not why, but I seem to feel that our only hope rests with Lady Desmond: and yet, how could her son make such a proposal; how

solicit her to open afresh the wound of her bosom, which time has not perfectly healed? It cannot be done: we must submit, and bend to the severity of our destinies. My tears almost efface what I have written. Angeline, may you never know the pangs of hopeless love; never, by sad experience, judge of my present feelings. Dear Desmond! how my heart bleeds for thee. Oh! my friend, say every thing that is affectionate from me, to tranquillize his mind: say that my tenderness can end but with my life; that unless cheered by his invigorating presence, the world will appear a blank. Ah! I dare not trust myself to add another line. Love fills my heart, my eyes; and duty and filial affection recede at his approach.

"CECIL FORTESCUE."

The crimson cheek, moistened by tears, was noticed by Mrs. Thomson, who, respectfully taking the letter from the hand of her young mistress, could not repress the sigh of honest sympathy, or the wish of an honest heart. "Oh! my dear lady," said

she, "that Alice Thomson may but live to see the blessed day when the families of the Earl and my revered lord will be reconciled; when the wooden bridge will again be thrown over the lake, and they will both pass over it as they were used to do!" Fearing that she had been too bold, she hastily returned to Mrs. Meynel, and delivered the reply of Miss Fortescue. The faithful attendant of Lady Emma had just time to place it in her pocket-book, when Robarts re-entered, and proposed to accompany her to the Castle.

"Dearest Phœbe," said he, placing her arm under his own, "do you know that one of my lord's best farms has become vacant by the death of Farmer Goodall: and my lord told me this morning as I was dressing him, that he would give it me as a trifling reward, he was pleased to say, for my fidelity and attachment to him. Now you know, Phœbe, what use would the farm be to me, unless I had a wife to manage the poultry and household concerns, and to cheer me with her smiles and caresses when I returned from overlooking my

men. It would be of no use at all, Phœbe, would it?"

"I don't know," replied Phœbe, colouring.

"Yes, but you do. Now tell me honestly, my dear Phœbe, if I were to accept of my lord's gracious offer (which I should not do, only that he told me I might see him daily, for that it was most likely he should reside constantly at the Abbey), would you make up your mind to leave your mistress, and take me for better for worse? You will find me the same kind of being I was three-and-twenty years ago. Then, Phœbe, you were a pretty rosy-cheeked girl of seventeen, with a heart as pure and as innocent as a baby. Ah, well do I remember that all was fixed for my master's wedding with Lady Emma, who was just fifteen; as sweet a creature as ever heaven formed.—But as I was saying, Phœbe, if I take Goodall Farm, will you consent to become my wife, and reward my constancy at last? Speak, Phœbe: my dear woman, hold up your head, and tell me at once what I may expect."

"Ah, Robarts," said Phœbe, sobbing, "you know my heart: I need not tell you it is all your own. Oh! I should be too happy to become your wife, were but the families reconciled; were they but friends: then my dear mistress could spare me; for then her heart would be made glad, even more glad than she at present thinks of."

"And am I then to give up all hope of calling you mine?" inquired Robarts in a mournful accent. "Ah! Phœbe, you know that the Viscount will never listen to any thing like a reconciliation. I know not what is the matter again, but Mr. Henry seems more thoughtful than ever: and latterly my dear young mistress, when out of her father's sight, sighs so sadly, and looks so unhappy, that she strongly reminds me of her deceased aunt. I fear that Lord Desmond has got complete possession of her heart, and that misery must be her portion."

"Oh! thou merciful God," exclaimed Phœbe, in a tone of unaffected piety, "save these innocent and amiable young

creatures from despair: soften the heart of the rigid Viscount, and make us all happy."

"Amen!" replied Robarts. "But, Phœbe, here is the Castle, and you will leave me undecided how to act about the farm."

"I cannot answer you now, Robarts, my mind is too full. Give me at least a few days to think upon it."

"Upon what?—Whether or no you will become my wife?—Ah! Phœbe, you took little time to think upon that three-and-twenty years back."

Phœbe's heart was full as well as her mind. She gave her lover a look which he well understood, and pressed her hand as she said, "True: but then I should not have quitted my dear mistress. Who, were I now to forsake her, would fill my place? Who listen—but I was going to say more than I ought. Dear Robarts, the love I bear my mistress cannot be wrong in your eyes; for well I know that you would never leave your master while your presence was necessary to his comforts."

Robarts again pressed her hand, and kissing off the falling tear, said: "Dear Phœbe, I will not seduce you from your mistress. The Viscount gave me a week to consider of his offer: I shall see you again before the time is expired. God bless you, and direct you for the best." He then left her, not willing that the housekeeper should perceive that any thing had ruffled him: and Phœbe with difficulty restrained her tears as she gave the letter of Miss Fortescue to Lady Angeline. Unfortunately for Phœbe, her mistress's bell summoned her to the private apartments of Lady Desmond. Not to notice her distress was impossible; and the mother of Cecil's lover inquired in the gentlest accents if she was unwell.

Phœbe's spirits, depressed by the morning's conversation with Robarts, could not support her: she burst into tears, and betrayed what she had wished to conceal—the hopes and wishes of her humble admirer.

"And what reply, my worthy friend, did you give Robarts?"

"I was so taken by surprise, my lady, that I could hardly speak to him. He asked me twice, before I could answer that I must have time to think of his offer. But why did I say time, for I know that when the week is past that the Viscount gave him, I shall still be in the same mind?"

"And what is that, Phœbe?" inquired Lady Desmond with emotion.

"Never to leave your ladyship," replied Phœbe sobbing. "It does not signify, I am certain: for I should never be happy, not even with Robarts in the farm, were I to leave your ladyship."

"Dearest Phœbe! Excellent, faithful creature!" exclaimed Lady Desmond, "you have already sacrificed to me the best part of your life, the bloom of your existence. Oh! how unworthy should I be of your noble attachment, did I allow you to hesitate at such a proposal as that now made you by Robarts. No, Phœbe, you must not damp the hopes of your constant, your affectionate lover. You must become his wife. You must be the mistress of Goodall-Farm."

Lady Desmond hastily left the chamber, and sought the solitude of the root-house, to give way to feelings which she was unwilling her worthy attendant should be witness to, much as she was convinced she should suffer in the deprivation of such a friend, such a confidant as Phœbe: yet she determined upon her becoming the wife of Robarts: it was a reward well worthy of her. And in viewing the happiness of these two faithful hearts, Lady Desmond fancied that she should forget the loss herself would sustain by being separated from one who had for so many years been the confidant of her regrets, the repository of her sorrows. Feeling, however, that the place she was now in was not calculated to compose her spirits, or tranquillize her mind, she was preparing to leave it, when the sound of her son's voice in a tone of despair made her pause at the threshold.

"Talk not of comfort, Angeline," said he, "when I hold in my hand what annihilates every hope. Does she not refuse to see me, to devise any plan by which I may be enabled to converse with her?

Cruel that she is, did her heart throb with a love ardent as mine, no obstacle would appear too great to be surmounted. No, Angeline, there is no hope left: Cecil refuses to see me, and I feel that I cannot live without her."

"Yet, dearest Robert," sweetly replied his cousin, "give not way to despair: let us rest in the root-house. Come, dear Robert, trust to my affection, I will write to Cecil; I will do all I can for you both: do not look so unhappy." Lord Desmond indeed looked unhappy: his countenance alarmed his mother, who now stood at the door of the root-house.

"Start not, my children," said she, taking a hand of each: "it is a mother, a friend, you behold. My son, my only hope, my only comfort, have you a grief, a sorrow, that thy mother may not share? Come," said she, throwing her arms round his neck, "come, my best beloved Robert, confide in me. Ah, my son! who can feel so truly the pangs of hopeless love as her who from childhood has groaned beneath its influence?"

Lord Desmond sunk on one knee before his weeping parent: he pressed her hand to his lips, and in an agony of tenderness and self-reproach disclosed the secret of his attachment. Lady Desmond wiped away her tears, and embraced her kneeling son: "Rise, my only treasure," said her ladyship, "nor fear to encounter the looks of thy mother. Rise, beloved youth, and from this hour let me be thy comforter, thy adviser. Come to my arms, dear Angeline. The virtues, the merits of Cecil Fortescue exempt you from blame in this affair. Ah, my son! well do I now comprehend the meaning of your prophetic words—'Another victim is not requisite to appease the spirit of his sister, or gratify the pride of his house.' And must you, my dear boy, must you too, my Robert, be the sacrifice? Forbid it, Heaven! May my blighted hopes atone for the errors of my brother! But let me see the letter of Cecil: nay, my son, do not wrong my tenderness. I cannot reproach either you or Miss Fortescue for possessing souls susceptible to each other's merits."

Lord Desmond unwillingly presented to his mother the letter of Cecil: with trembling tenderness she perused it. When she came to that part where Miss Fortescue said—"All hope rests with your mother," she looked first at her son, and then at Lady Angeline: "What does this mean, Robert? What proposal can you make that I should refuse to accede to?"

"Oh, my adored mother! I would die sooner than you should be put to the trial. I accused Cecil of want of love; yet love alone could have suggested such a thought. I cannot tell you—I would not for the world you should suppose me capable of wishing to expose you to such a painful task."

"And will you refuse to give me the information I demand? Then, Angeline, I must appeal to you."

"Oh, not to me, dear aunt, not to me. I would not wound you by the mention of such an idea."

"My children," firmly replied Lady Desmond, "your forbearance agonizes me more than would the knowledge of Cecil's only hope. Think you that I would shrink from

any torture, however great, that could be rewarded by bestowing happiness on my child? Speak then, Robert: trust to thy mother's love, nor fear a refusal."

"My adored mother, your tenderness unmans me! Give me leave to regain my self-command before I touch again upon the subject nearest my heart." He darted out of the root-house, leaving his cousin to reply, if possible, to his mother.

"My sweet niece," said Lady Desmond, "knows not by experience the doubts, the fears, the hopes, the wishes of a lover. Oh! my dear girl, may your gentle bosom only throb with all the tenderness of passion: may you ever remain in happy ignorance of what my son and I are fated to endure. But will you not tell me, Angeline, what your friend alludes to? Come, let us return to the privacy of my chamber: there let me hear how best I can serve my darling boy, and the beloved daughter of the Viscount."

As they returned to the Castle, Lady Desmond confessed that she had several times been induced to suspect the attach-

ment of her son, but that she had always tried to banish the idea, as teeming with evil; and Lady Angeline in return disclosed every thing but the meaning of her friend's "only hope." Her aunt, however, entreated her in such persuasive terms, that at length she with tears acknowledged that all their hopes rested upon the influence she might possess over the Viscount, by a personal application.

The countenance of Lady Desmond turned pale as death: every limb was convulsed; and her terrified niece was just going to call Phœbe, but a sign from her aunt made her return. She raised her eyes to Heaven in fervent devotion; then cast her arms round her trembling niece.

"Angeline, you know not to what exertions the feelings of a mother will lead me. Did my son, did you, my dear girl, doubt my maternal love? Oh! you knew not my heart: it may break in the attempt, but it shall be made. Yes, Angeline, I will see the Viscount: I will throw myself at his feet; I will clasp his hand, his knees; I will not quit him until he grants my re-

quest: I will expire at his feet, if he refuse me. He will not, he cannot deny the pleadings of a mother. I shall succeed: I shall behold the face, the form once so dear to me. My son will be happy—happy in the possession of his soul's idol, and his mother will have been the means of bestowing it."

Her head sunk on the throbbing bosom of Lady Angeline, whose tears fell fast on the pale face of her exhausted aunt.

"My dearest Angeline, now you may ring for Phœbe. Tell my son his mother holds the sacrifice of life too cheap, if it can purchase his felicity; but I must have a few days to gain courage for the trial."

Phœbe entered; and Lady Angeline, after again embracing her aunt, left her to the tender care of her faithful attendant. As soon as Lady Desmond had got the better of her emotions, she discovered to her affectionate confidant what had happened, and her own determination to sacrifice all personal considerations for the welfare of her son.

"Ah, Madam!" cried Phœbe, in a tone

of exultation, "all will yet be well, and I shall live to see you happy. Oh! I shall go wild with joy—I know I shall, I know I shall."

"My poor Phœbe, thy heart leads thy head astray. Should I succeed, should I indeed soften the resentment of Lord Fortescue, and gain his consent to recant a part of his vow—to suffer our children to be united, I shall have gained a glorious victory, and shall resign my breath in peace. But, Phœbe, I shall not gain it cheaply—the trial will be severe. May my strength of body, my fortitude of mind, prove equal to the task."

Nothing could exceed the veneration and love which Lord Desmond felt on hearing the determination of his mother: all selfish considerations were lost, and the son for awhile got the ascendancy over the lover. "What a trial for my beloved mother!" exclaimed his lordship: "how will she support an interview with the Viscount, with one to whom she was betrothed in her youth, and to whom she was so strongly attached! Oh, my mother! and is it I—I

that am the ungrateful cause of wounding afresh thy tender bosom? Oh, my adored Cecil! even thy love will be bought too dearly, should my mother's strength be unequal to the trial which awaits her."

"Heaven will endue her with fortitude," replied Lady Angeline, "and with additional eloquence, to plead in such a cause. Fear not, my dear Robert: the Almighty will bless the exertions of my aunt, will soften the severe resentment of the Viscount, and once again the families of De Courci and Fortescue will be friends. But I must not suffer my poor friend to be ignorant of the noble struggle which will be made for her happiness: I must write a few lines to Cecil, and send them by Bessy to Mrs. Thomson."

"My best comforter!" said her cousin: "I leave it to you to inform my beloved of the glorious resolution of my mother. At present my whole soul is absorbed in filial tenderness—I cannot even write to Cecil."

Lady Angeline now quitted him to execute his friendly task, and Bessy was sent to the Abbey, with strict orders to give it

only to the housekeeper: no answer was required.

Trembling with apprehension, Miss Fortescue opened the second billet of Lady Angeline: it was short, but its contents almost deprived her of motion. As soon as she recovered from her astonishment, she flew to the chamber of her sister-in-law, and without speaking put the note into her hand.

"Noble, generous, Lady Desmond!" exclaimed the wife of Sidney: "may Heaven prosper your endeavours! Oh, my Cecil! such a woman cannot sue in vain: she must succeed, and I shall yet behold my dearest sister the wife of her son—the happy being destined by Providence to re-unite the hostile families."

Love and hope sparkled in the bright eyes of Miss Fortescue, yet was she not insensible to the agonized feelings such an interview must naturally excite in the bosoms of her father and Lady Desmond. Tears of duty and filial affection, not rapture, moistened her blooming cheek. With anxious solicitude she accompanied her

brothers in the evening on the lake, and felt her spirits revive as she caught a glance from her lover, who, with his uncle, Lord Reginald, Captain Evelyn, and Lady Angeline, were in their pleasure-boat.

The eyes of the latter were fixed tenderly on Miss Fortescue: she heard not the flattering nonsense of the handsome soldier who sat next her, and who was vainly endeavouring to secure her attention to himself. "Come, Angeline," said the Earl, "let George hear the effects of your syren voice on the water. Sing me that beautiful duet of Mozart's—'The manly heart with love o'erflowing,' and Robert will accompany you."

Lady Angeline knew not how to refuse her uncle: she therefore timidly complied with his request, and indeed enchanted young Evelyn with the richness and sweetness of her voice. He gazed on her with an admiration which he sought not to conceal, and oppressed her by his praise, and the free expression of his looks; while Lord Desmond's voice softened more than usual by the tenderness of his feelings.

His eyes rested on the beloved form of Cecil, as her boat slowly passed that of the Earl's, whose presence restrained his nephew from bowing as usual.

Lord De Courci, who was an enthusiastic admirer of female beauty, openly expressed his admiration of the daughter of his enemy. All joined in his opinion except the enamoured soldier, who saw only Lady Angeline; while she, unconscious of the emotions she had given birth to in the heart of Captain Evelyn, sat silently by his side, her thoughts fixed on a far different object. Once she encountered the eyes of Henry Fortescue: he seemed to be attentively watching her motions, and she had not courage again to meet his looks.

With a degree of inquietude Henry observed the marked attention of the young officer to Lady Angeline, and found himself unable to withdraw his eyes from their boat. Restless, uneasy, and dissatisfied with himself, he quitted his family, and returned to the Abbey. His father, with the General, and Mrs. Aveland, were not yet returned from their ride, and he therefore retired to

his own apartments. Fond of flowers, Henry had some very fine plants in his sitting-room. Mrs. Thomson, who had the care of them, was there, and with his usual affability he immediately entered into conversation with her, praising the flourishing appearance of his trees, and attributing it all to her skill and attention.

Flattered by his condescension, she replied—"I am happy, Sir, that you are pleased with them, and do assure you that I have made them my constant care. I was not a little proud of the praise I received from two ladies, who I once ventured to shew them to."

"Who do you mean?" inquired Henry, with a curiosity not natural to him.

"You will be angry, Sir, if I tell you."

"No, indeed, I shall not."

"Well then, Sir, the ladies who admired your plants were no others than Lady Elvira and Lady Angeline De Courci. They called on me one day before they left the Castle, and I took the liberty to shew them the improvements which were then making in the Abbey."

"And were they here in this room?" hastily demanded the son of Lord Fortescue.

"Ah! I was afraid you would be angry, Sir."

"Dear Mrs. Thomson, I am not angry, I assure you. But what did they say? Did they indeed admire my plants?"

"Yes, Sir; and after they were gone, when I went to water them, I saw that a branch had been broken off from one of the myrtles. Ah! this was it; but I did not see which it was that had taken it. Lady Elvira, that beautiful creature, laughed and talked as if I had been her equal; but her sweet sister, who looks so thoughtful, and so like the angelic Lady Emma, said but little; yet, when she did speak, I could have fallen down, and worshipped her, she looked so like a picture I have seen of some angel."

Henry sighed, as he listened with breathless attention to the housekeeper. "I half suspect that it was Lady Angeline who took the myrtle," continued Mrs. Thomson, "for she staid behind a few minutes after her sister and I had left the room."

The blood once more rushed into the cheek of Henry, and his heart throbbed at the supposition. "Did they notice any thing else?" said he.

"Lady Angeline sat down in your study-chair, Sir, and looked at some books which lay on the table. She shewed one to her sister, who I think said to her, 'You have got the second volume of that.'—I forget the name, Sir, it was some foreign author."

"Was it Petrarch?" hastily asked Henry.

"Yes, Sir, that I think was the name. They then said something to each other in Italian, I believe, and Lady Elvira followed me to the next suite of apartments. Ah! Sir, forgive me; but I little dreamt that her ladyship would not return this summer to the Castle: I had made up my mind that she would make my revered lord break his hateful vow. Oh! she was so beautiful, that he could not haue kept it, had he once seen her."

Mrs. Thompson might have gone on without fear of interruption from Henry, who had thrown himself into that very study-chair which once held the graceful

form of Lady Angeline; and lost in deep reflection, he was in fact unconscious that any one was near him. The closing of the door roused him, and he discovered that Mrs. Thomson had quitted the chamber. Immediately rising, he selected from his trees the myrtle which had been pointed out as having been shorn of one of its branches. With tenderness he placed it in the middle of his study-table; and again flinging himself into the chair, felt that he could remain in it for ever.

Short, however, was the empire of passion. He cast his eyes on the picture of his father, which hung over the chimney: abashed at having yielded to the momentary delusion of his heart, he rose from the beloved seat, and joined his brother and sisters.

The next day, and the succeeding one, he again saw Lady Angeline, and at her side the same young man whose marked attention had so much discomposed him. Vainly he endeavoured to catch a passing glance from her sweet blue eyes: she turned them solely on his sister, and he

felt his spirits sink at the idea of having given offence to one so long and so deservedly esteemed. Cecil could not as usual afford him consolation by her affectionate conversation. Since his interview with Lord Desmond, he had avoided being alone with her; and she, conscious that he would condemn her weakness and want of obedience, shunned the brother whom she idolized.

Every sound now gave her alarm, lest it should be Lady Desmond: she spent her mornings in the chamber of Mrs. Fortescue, in whose presence alone she seemed to feel courage. Three days had elapsed since she received the two notes from Lady Angeline, and her suspense became almost insupportable. She began to dread, lest her ladyship's resolution had failed, lest she should decline a personal application to the Viscount; and Cecil's hopes rested upon that. Restless, uneasy, and dispirited, she saw the fourth morning arrive, when, as if conscious that it would decide her fate, she begged of Mrs. Fortescue to

accompany her in her father's carriage to the next village, where some families resided who had experienced the delightful effects of her charitable and active benevolence.

CHAPTER II.

Lady Desmond saw the dawn of the fourth day appear, with a composed and steady mind. She watched from her window the rising sun, as he gradually dispelled the cold grey tints of morning: it was then that a sigh escaped her, as she remembered that ere he had journeyed to the west the future happiness of her beloved son would be decided upon.

Closing the casement, she once more offered up her prayers to Heaven, and felt as she rose a pleasing confidence that a mother's orisons would not be said in vain. Phœbe was summoned, and her carriage ordered to be in readiness immediately after breakfast.

"Ah! my dear lady, may I not go with you?" said Phœbe, instantly comprehending her meaning.—"Pray let me go with

you: I can wait in Mrs. Thomson's room."

"Since you wish it, my worthy friend, you may; but keep my intention secret: I would not have any of my family acquainted with my visit until it is over. I think I have prepared myself sufficiently for the trial. Should I, however, betray any weakness as I approach the Abbey, remind me, Phœbe, that my son's peace of mind depends upon my successful application."

Lady Desmond then went as usual to the chamber of Lady Mary, whose presence was expected in a few days to grace the family circle. After hearing that she was perfectly well, her ladyship joined her relations in the breakfast-parlour; nor could they discern from her looks and manner the important subject which alone occupied her mind. On returning to her own apartment, Phœbe was ordered to take from a private drawer of her cabinet a little gold box. Lady Desmond unclosed it, and taking from it a ring composed of six different jewels, she with a look of anguish placed it on her finger. For a moment she gazed on

it, then said: "I am ready, Phœbe: give me my veil. I scarce think the Viscount will remember me. Time, and hopeless love, have stolen from my cheek the bloom he so much admired, and robbed my eyes of their lustre—at eight-and-thirty, I am only the shadow of what I was."

"Ah! my lady," replied Phœbe, "but time has not altered the sweetness of your features: the goodness of an angel dwells in your countenance still."

Lady Desmond now took the arm of her affectionate confidant, and in a few minutes the carriage was in sight of the Abbey. A servant unknown to her ladyship fortunately opened the door, and on being told that a lady requested to speak with Lord Fortescue alone, she was shewn into his lordship's study. Throwing back her veil, she cast a trembling glance over the well-known chamber: a faintness overcame her; and her heart beat as if it would have burst through her bosom. She heard steps advancing. Her breath grew shorter and shorter. Remembering, however, her son, and the necessity of recovering her self-

command, she became more tranquil. At length the door opened, and Lord Fortescue entered.

Lady Desmond rose. Her eyes once more beheld the man whom her heart had never ceased to adore. The recollection of her son alone prevented her from fainting. The Viscount started back, scarce believing his senses: then springing forward, he exclaimed:

"Lady Emma!" and sinking into a chair, covered his face with his hands.

"Not Emma De Courci, my lord," said her ladyship, in a trembling voice, "but the mother of Lord Desmond."

Lord Fortescue remained in the same attitude.

"I ought to apologize, my lord, for this unwelcome intrusion; but the extreme necessity which obliged me to intrude on your lordship's time must plead my excuse." Still was he silent, and she continued: "I come not to upbraid you, my lord, with the violation of your plighted faith—I come not to reproach you with your cruel abandonment, your unjust desertion of one

whom you had sworn to love with fidelity till death—but I am come, my lord, to throw myself on your mercy, and to solicit that lenity which you would not withhold from any but a De Courci. Oh! my lord, it is now in your power to bestow a happiness long unknown to me: it is in your power to reward me for all my past sufferings, and to efface from my memory the recollection of my own blighted hopes."

Lord Fortescue groaned: he felt as if his soul was quitting his body. Slowly he uncovered his face, and raising his eyes to heaven, fervently exclaimed:

"Oh! thou Supreme Being, do not desert me in this hour of trial.—Was this requisite to try my obedience?" Then turning them on Lady Desmond, whose firmness began to yield, he said in a voice of trembling tenderness:

"What power can an unfortunate like me possess to bestow what I have never known the blessing of?—Doomed to forego every claim to happiness, how then can I bestow it on Lady Desmond? Yet, if indeed I still retain that power, and it does not interfere

with my solemn vow, made to my deceased father—speak, Lady Desmond, your request is granted." Again he covered his face: yet the deep-drawn sigh, the tears which fell rapidly from beneath his hand, betrayed what he vainly endeavoured to conceal.

"Your vow, my lord, was a compulsory one," replied her ladyship, affected by the sight of his distress, and the remembrance of when last they had parted. "I cannot believe that you willingly doomed me—me, to whom your first vows were made, to a life of unavailing regrets. Oh! my lord," said she, rising, and leaning for support against the chair on which he sat, "if it was thought necessary that I should be the sacrifice to the youthful crime of my brother, let the disappointment of my dearest hopes atone for his guilt.—Oh! let the tears that I have shed since that fatal night wash away his offences. Let your hatred, your resentment, fall on me alone: but let my son be exempt from your rash vow—let our children be united in those tender bonds of hereditary love which once we felt."

Lord Fortescue in amazement started from his seat, but he had not power to quit the still idolized form which stood near him.

Lady Desmond flung herself at his feet: she clasped his knees, while her beautiful eyes were fixed in expressive supplication on his varying countenance.

"Let me not plead in vain. Enough has been sacrificed to family honour, family pride. The affection which in childhood filled our bosoms now fills the hearts of our children.—Oh! my lord, do not doom my son, my darling son, to the same misery to which you consigned his mother: do not make creation appear a desert to him—give him your lovely daughter, and let the families again be united."

"Rise, I conjure you," hastily replied the Viscount, taking her hand: the touch thrilled through his frame. Unable any longer to command his feelings, he burst into tears, and again sunk on the chair.

"I will not, cannot rise," said Lady Desmond, "until my request is granted. By the remembrance of that love which

once you bore me, and of which this ring is the sacred pledge, O spare my son from a fate like mine!"

The Viscount cast a shuddering glance at the well-known gift, and involuntarily catching the fair hand on which it sparkled, he pressed it to his lips: then forcing her to rise, placed her on the seat next him.

"Emma," said he in a faltering voice, "could you but see into my heart, you would not tax me with injustice or cruelty. The wrongs of my injured sister, the entreaties, the agonies of my parents, called upon me to sacrifice myself to avenge her untimely fate. I abandoned the object dearest to my soul; I gave up to filial duty my adored Emma, my betrothed, my affianced bride: but—I could not tear her from my heart.—There have you lived, Emma—live still.—How I adore thee, these tears speak most forcibly. Oh! do not seek to make me violate that vow which made me the victim of filial piety.—How can I accede to your request, and yet preserve my honour?"

"To preserve it you must be just," re-

plied the mother of Lord Desmond. "With respect to myself, your vow remains inviolate. The wounded pride of your revered father, the injured honour of my sweet friend your sister, has been atoned for by the sacrifice you made, when you consigned me to wander through life the victim of hopeless love. But let not our children, who are young and innocent, feel the baneful effects of your unchristianlike resentment. Heaven implanted in their hearts at first sight a tenderness for each other. They love with a passion pure and ardent as that which once was cherished by their unhappy parents. Oh! my lord, on your word depends their future happiness or misery: doom them not to endless lamentation from a false sense of honour. Let us for ever be separated—but let our children be united."

"Angelic creature!" exclaimed Lord Fortescue, "thy voice, thy form, thy features alone, could tempt me to renounce my detested promise: yet, Emma, how sacredly have I kept it, how tenaciously have I held it inviolate, even when my whole

heart remained devoted to thee! Years, and the duties of a new connection, could not efface thy beloved image from my mind. When I first returned to the Abbey, after that fatal transaction, how bitter were my reflections! In the moment of keen resentment, rendered still keener by the remembrance of thee, my lost love, I strove to impress on the minds of my children my father's hatred, my father's wishes: but Providence has counteracted my designs, and made one of them at least, it appears, as susceptible as her father.—I must, however, have a little time to reflect before I decide."

"Oh!" exclaimed Lady Desmond, "no time was allowed you to decide upon the justness of deserting one, who from infancy was devotedly attached to you. You did not hesitate to doom me to ruin and misery—Oh! do not hesitate to recall me to life, to happiness; to bestow felicity on your child, and on the son of your once loved Emma!"

"Once!" passionately exclaimed the Viscount: "say rather, still loved Emma.

Yes," he continued, pressing her hand with unutterable fondness to his bosom, "thou art still idolized, still adored, and will remain so while the breath animates my body: but the solemn vow I made never to become thine separates us for ever:—and if I yield to thy entreaties, to the pleadings of my own heart, and to the wishes of our children, still my vow precludes all hope for myself. Oh! Emma, never, never, shall I taste the bliss of calling thee mine—of proving the eternity of that passion, the existence of which you doubt."

Lady Desmond, overcome by the evident sufferings of his lordship, forgot her own wrongs, her own miseries, and wept afresh at the sight of what he now endured.

"Henry," said she, in a voice of irresistible softness, "I seek not to seduce you into error. Again let me repeat that so far as relates to ourselves your promise remains sacred. But the Almighty, who disposes of events, in permitting our children to love under your severe prohibition, has taught us the weakness of all human precautions, the rashness of all those vows

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dictated by the sense of injuries. The feelings of a mother alone endued me with fortitude to go through this interview. For my son I could resign my breath willingly, were it to ensure his happiness; but never shall I be able to give him a stronger proof of my love than the present. Surely, a father's heart is not less tender than mine: and Cecil's peace of mind is equally dear to you. If you have indeed suffered from disappointed affection, oh! save her from a similar wretchedness. Bless her by recanting in part your hasty promise: do not war against nature—against Heaven: do not refuse to lighten the weight of my sorrows, which have nearly brought me to the verge of a premature grave."

Lord Fortescue cast a glance of speechless woe, of melting tenderness, on the still beautiful form of the supplicating Lady Desmond.

"Oh! Emma," he cried, "had you been present at that dreadful meeting, vain would then have been the commands of my father. I should have clasped thee to my heart, and in a paroxysm of love and madness, have dared to prove the weakness of filial

duty, when balanced against a passion such as you alone are capable of inspiring. But I was saved from the sin of disobedience—and, O my father! if now I yield to the heavenly voice of mercy and forgiveness; if now I trespass on thy life's last wish; if I consent to exempt my children from a vow fatal to their happiness, and once more receive into this house a descendant of that of De Courci, it is because I feel that enough has indeed been done to satisfy thy resentment, to avenge the death of my sister. And thou, O Father of heaven! bless, oh! bless my recantation: let my sufferings, and those of this dear, injured excellence, absolve me from the sin of violating an oath made in thy presence. Emma, my betrothed, my ever beloved Emma, thy prayers are granted: thy son shall be the husband of Cecil."

Lady Desmond sunk on her knees before the Viscount: she attempted to speak; but joy, and still unsubdued affection, overcame her, and she dropped lifeless in his arms. Trembling with tenderness and alarm, the Viscount had little power to

support the angel form of his once betrothed wife. A cold perspiration chilled his frame; and his face touched that of the insensible victim of filial obedience. A deep sigh announced returning life; and Lord Fortescue once more beheld those eyes of sweetest blue open on himself.

"I am ashamed of my weakness," said her ladyship, faintly; "but my constitution is not so strong as it once was. You have given me new life, my lord; and yet I want words to express my gratitude. My son must be the bearer of what I now feel incapable of giving utterance to. Oh! my lord, you have blessed me beyond my hopes: you have obliterated every trace of my past misery; and I trust that your own heart rewards you for the deed."

The Viscount averted his face. A convulsive sigh escaped him. Lady Desmond made an effort to rise. He flew to assist her; and ringing the bell, ordered her carriage. Then pressing her hand passionately to his lips, he gave her a look which sunk deep into her heart, and expressed all the mingled emotions of love still strug-

gling with duty. Again he pressed her hand to his lips.

"Emma," said he, in a low voice, "I will prepare my daughter for the happiness that awaits her. I cannot enter the Castle of De Courci, but she shall see you this evening."

He then handed her to her carriage, where poor Phœbe was waiting in anxious solicitude: and then desiring Robarts might attend him, he returned to his study.

Tears of the bitterest anguish rolled down the fine features of the Viscount, as he flung himself on the chair Lady Desmond had just quitted; and Robarts, who knew of her visit, hastened with fear and trembling to his beloved master; who, in recounting the severe trial he had just gone through, felt comfort in the rapture and honest pleasure his faithful confidant sought not to repress.

"Oh, my dear lord!" said he, rubbing his hands for joy, "I have lived long enough. I care not if I die to-morrow. I shall see once more the two families united: I shall see happiness animate every face: I

shall see, oh! I shall see all I have ever wished to see." His sobs made him pause, and Lord Fortescue, unwilling to damp the delight of one so worthy, forbore to express the real wretchedness of his soul.

"My faithful friend," said his lordship, "I shall now see you the husband of Phœbe Meynel, and the proprietor of Goodall Farm." He stopped, lest his voice should betray the keenness of his own feelings. "Go, Robarts, and send my daughter to me."

Robarts flew with all the speed of his early years. Miss Fortescue was just returned from her charitable employment. She had heard from Mrs. Thomson of the visit of Lady Desmond; and, scarce able to walk, she with difficulty obeyed the desire of her father. Robarts, half frantic with joy, laughed, cried, danced, sung, and committed a hundred extravagancies, all expressive of his feelings; while Cecil, faint and sick at heart, appeared before the melancholy Viscount.

"My child," said he, holding open his arms to receive her, "my Cecil is the

highly-favoured being destined by Heaven to reunite the hostile families. Yes, dear girl, thy father exempts thee from a fate like his. Look up, my beloved Cecil; let rapture animate thy sinking spirits: thy father has seen, has conversed with the mother of Lord Desmond. Happy, happy girl! no parent's harsh commands divide thee from him thy soul holds most dear: no cruel vow compels thee to abandon thy heart's fondest wishes." His head sunk on the throbbing bosom of his daughter.

"My father! my adored father! and have you indeed recanted that cruel vow, and for my sake? Oh, my dear father! and do you forgive my disobedience in bestowing my heart, unsanctioned by you?"

"Ah, my beloved Cecil!" replied the still agitated Viscount: "I feel that the son of Lady Emma could not supplicate in vain. If, indeed, he possesses his mother's sweetness, his mother's voice and look, my child's heart would be unlike her father's, had she remained unmoved, had she refused her love. Let us go, my Cecil, to

your brothers: before them I will explain my wishes."

Lord Fortescue leaned for support on the arm of his happy smiling daughter. In the drawing-room he found his children, who were yet unacquainted with the result of Lady Desmond's visit.

"My sons," said the Viscount, making an effort to conceal his emotions, "you will rejoice at what I am going to inform you. But perhaps the tears and blushes of your sister betray that her happiness has been my first consideration: that, to ensure it, I have in part recanted my promise, and saved her from being the third victim of family pride." He paused: Sidney flew forward, and caught the hand of his father.

"Oh, my father! blessed for ever, blessed be the day, the hour, when parental tenderness subdued parental hatred. Dear father, you know not the happiness you have bestowed on all your children: you know not with what pain, with what inquietude we have refrained from expressing

our desires to become openly the friends of that amiable family."

The Viscount cast a look on Sidney, which brought the blood into his cheeks: then turning to his youngest son, who sat with his face concealed, and his head leaning on his hand:

"My Henry," said his lordship, "my beloved son, why this unusual backwardness in expressing what you feel? Does your silence chide your father for violating his promise?"

"Oh, no!" hastily replied Henry, rising, and pressing the extended hand of the Viscount to his lips, while his fine eyes were humid with tears of unexpected felicity: "my dear father wrongs me, if for a moment he supposes that my heart does not share in the general rapture of such an event as the present. No one has more bitterly lamented that my father was ever withheld from the delightful friendship of that family, or that the natural benevolence and goodness of his nature was restricted by his uncharitable oath."

The eyes of Lord Fortescue turned separately on his three children.

"All but myself," he replied with gravity, "seem at least to be well informed on the merits of my enemy's family. Sidney once made me tremble for him. Nay, blush not my son: thy father seeks not to pry into the little errors of thy judgment: you have made me happy since that time of alarm; and if my suspicions were true, it only proves that Nature never intended the two families to remain at variance with each other. Henry, you must accompany your sister this evening to call on Lady Desmond." His voice faltered. "In consenting to her becoming the wife of that angelic woman's son, I give a proof that my parental feelings have conquered my judgment. The vow I made might be a rash one, but nevertheless no consideration of personal felicity could have tempted me to break it. It is true, my children, that my heart was assailed in its most vulnerable part—perhaps its only one. However, from this hour I exempt you from your promise

of avoiding that family, and give my consent to your acting henceforward as your inclinations appear to wish. For myself I remain a victim to the vow I made my ever-to-be revered father: no prospect of happiness can make me yield to the weakness of my passions. Freely may you enter the proscribed walls of the Castle, and enjoy the blessings it contains: but my footsteps never press its restricted shore. I feel my heart incapable of forgetting what it once was; yet should the present Earl think fit to honour me with a visit, I will receive him as his courtesy demands.—Henry, my son, you will attend on Cecil: I shall dine to-day in my own chamber."

The Viscount left the drawing-room just as Mrs. Fortescue, who had been reading to her mother, entered it. During her congratulations, Henry retired to his own apartment. His eyes involuntarily sought his favourite myrtle: it was become more dear to him, since his father had now sanctioned his courting the friendship of that sweet being whose touch had rendered it sacred. He could scarcely believe the reality

of what he had just heard, scarcely credit that a few hours would see him within the walls of that Castle he had never expected to enter; and almost doubted whether he was not indulging a day-dream of his imagination, till the voice of his sister, inquiring if she might enter, and the happy expression of her blooming countenance, assured him that he had not been musing on fiction. Embracing her affectionately, he congratulated her on the blissful change which had taken place.

"And may I not hope, my dearest Henry, that it will increase your happiness also?" The colour deepened on his cheek.

"That is uncertain, my beloved Cecil," he replied, instantly comprehending her meaning. "I must entreat that no consideration of friendship or affection will tempt you to betray the confidence I have reposed in you. Time must convince me that I have not worshipped an imaginary idol. If you value my repose, Cecil, you must never drop even a distant hint to Lady Angeline that she was ever the subject of my meditations."

"Dearest Henry, and must I then obey you? Must I check the warm feelings of my heart? Oh! my brother, can you doubt the excellence, the purity of that dear, that generous friend of your Cecil?"

"I do not doubt, my sister, but that she is every thing my most sanguine wishes could hope for; but my recent loss for a time will restrain my actions: and should I again enter the marriage-state, I must be perfectly convinced that the woman of my choice feels for me that love, that corresponding tenderness, which alone would make me happy."

Cecil pressed his hand:

"What unlooked-for felicity, my Henry, is now within our view! To see daily the angelic sister of Lady Elvira, to enjoy her friendship and sweet society, sanctioned by my dear father—oh! what supreme bliss! Is it not, my brother?"

He smiled enchantingly on his lovely sister:

"Yes, my dear Cecil, and to listen to the tenderness of Lord Desmond, to anticipate the pure joys of domestic life with

one so loved, so idolized—oh! what supreme bliss! Is it not, my sister?"

Cecil, blushing with rapturous confusion, ran down to the dining-parlour, followed by her youngest brother. Of course, nothing else was talked of but the parental love of the Viscount: nothing thought of but the delight they should now feel in associating with the amiable family of Lord De Courci; and the dinner was removed almost untouched by Henry and his sister, who tremblingly prepared for her visit to the Castle.

Lady Desmond, on quitting the Abbey, wept unrestrained on the bosom of her humble friend, whose joy but for this would have been without alloy. On returning to the Castle, Lady Desmond soon made known her morning's visit, and the glorious victory she had gained.

The Earl and his son felt pleasure at the Viscount's relaxing from his vow, and proposed to call on him the next day, while Lord Desmond and Lady Angeline by turns wept for joy, as they embraced the beloved cause of such unlooked-for happiness; yet

could not avoid feeling, amidst their exultation, a fear lest her ladyship had suffered severely from the interview. Like the Viscount, she proposed to pass the remainder of the day in her chamber, until the arrival of Miss Fortescue. It was, indeed, necessary that she should repose herself from the exertions of the morning: the paleness of her looks, and the increasing quickness of her pulse, denoted the exhaustion of her bodily strength.

With a heart throbbing with rapture and love, Lord Desmond waited for the arrival of the Viscount's carriage—it came. He flew to receive his beloved Cecil and her youngest brother, and conducted them to the drawing-room. Lady Angeline silently embraced her friends—words were not requisite to pourtray her feelings: her tearful eye of heavenly blue, her cheek tinged with rapture, her trembling form, too well expressed the genuine emotions of her soul; while the Earl in the most flattering terms expressed his pleasure at once more seeing a part of the Fortescue family within the walls of his Castle.

Henry, unrestrained by parental restrictions, now gave way to the regard he had secretly entertained for Lord Desmond; and the son of Lady Emma felt supremely blest, as he gazed on the beautiful object of his affections, and anticipated the rapture he should enjoy in her society. Lady Desmond, supported by her niece, now entered. In a moment the sweet daughter of the Viscount was pressed to her maternal bosom; and Henry felt affected as he kissed her hand, as he viewed the fine features and graceful form of his father's early love. She perceived his agitation, and gently pressing his hand, gave him a look of tenderness, which Henry returned with filial veneration.

The next day was fixed upon for the introduction of Sidney and his amiable wife, who with Henry and his sister were to dine at the Castle by the express desire of Lord De Courci. He spoke of the Viscount in terms highly gratifying to his children, while Lady Angeline, too happy in witnessing the re-union of the families, sat a silent spectator of what passed. Henry

every now and then cast a glance towards her, but her eyes were kept on the ground, and it was not until he rose to take leave that he had the satisfaction of beholding them.

Lord Desmond of course accompanied Miss Fortescue home. Sidney received him with all the ardour natural to his character, and Mrs. Fortescue archly reminded him that they were old acquaintances. The Viscount no sooner heard of their return, than he hastened to meet them; and the son of Lady Emma felt his happiness more certain, more complete, as the father of his Cecil, in trembling fondness, pressed him to his breast, and joining his hand with that of his blushing child, exclaimed:

"Dear youth! whose animated form and features remind me of all my soul held dear, may the affection of my Cecil prove that felicity is yet the lot of mortals. Oh! may ye be blest in each other: may every succeeding year bind you more firmly together: may you love with all the constancy, all the eternity of passion; and

God grant that the re-union of the families may for ever remain unbroken!"

The General and Mrs. Aveland were now introduced to Lord Desmond, and rejoiced very sincerely at what had passed. Every domestic of the two houses felt happy that the restriction they had been under no longer existed, and Mrs. Thomson and Robarts actually cried for joy.

"Ah!" said the former, "I shall have my wish at last: I shall see before I die the bridge again thrown across the lake: I shall see the dear young people walk together in love and kindness; and my dear master deserves—oh! I know not what he deserves for making us all so happy."

"He deserves," replied Robarts, "to be happy himself; but that cannot be. However, let us bless God for the happiness that is now allowed us, and my dear lord will receive some comfort from having the son of Lady Emma become his. Phœbe too, my dear and faithful Phœbe, will no longer refuse to become my wife, and we shall be happy at last. Virtue you know,

Mrs. Thomson, is sure to be its own reward."

"And sure enough it is," said she. "Well, I have got my wish at last, though Lady Elvira was not the one to bring it about. No matter—beauty is but skin deep; and I fear it is so there. Mr. Sidney, I dare say, has bettered himself, and we have all reason to be satisfied with his choice."

Mr. Sidney had certainly, to use Alice Thomson's words, bettered himself, and entrusted the happiness of his life into the keeping of one who lived but for him, who saw not a fault he possessed, and who doated on him with that constant steady tenderness, which alone could have rendered him what he was. The re-union of the once hostile families awakened in the mind of Sidney a desire to know what effect it would have upon the beautiful wife of Everard Wrottesley; and he felt, on revisiting with his brother and family the scene of his imprudent passion, a palpitation of the heart, a saddened thoughtfulness, that proclaimed he was still interested

in the fate of one for whom he had risked so much.

Lord De Courci had called on his father—had received the hand of the Viscount in token of renewed friendship; but he had not been able, with all his persuasive oratory, to draw him from the solitude of the Abbey.

"No, my lord," said the Viscount, affected by the kindness of the Earl, "the bloom of my years have been passed in voluntary seclusion from the world, in adhering perhaps too firmly to the vow dictated by parental resentment. Solitude alone has charms for me. I cannot wholly exempt myself from the consequences of that promise: I cannot stifle feelings to which I have been a martyr: I cannot banish from my mind the remembrance of past sufferings. You must give way, my lord, to those feelings which will prevent my entering the Castle, and which doom me to continue a life of unavailing regrets."

Lord De Courci yielded with sentiments of pity and sorrow to the determination of the Viscount. He quitted him with affec-

tionate reluctance, and resolved to shew his children all the attention and tenderness in his power. With pride, and secret exultation, he beheld them seated round his table. Always fascinating, always attractive, the Earl now shone to the greatest advantage. Lady Mary, for the first time since her confinement, appeared at dinner, and by her presence increased the general joy.

Her brother sat next to Lady Angeline, and was more than ever solicitous to please her, but he failed in his desire, until the young hope of the De Courcis was introduced with the dessert. Young Evelyn took the blooming infant from its nurse, and carried him to her ladyship. It was then she smiled upon the handsome soldier, who in return gallantly kissed her hand, and reseating himself, played with the clasping fingers of the babe, that he might enjoy the sight of Lady Angeline; who in the tenderness of her heart for the child of Lady Mary, was pleased to see its uncle equally delighted as herself.

Henry beheld her in the enchanting oc-

cupation of a nurse with a new feeling of admiration: yet he liked not the marked attention of Captain Evelyn; and even felt relieved when the ladies withdrew, that at least he for some time would be debared his enviable situation.

The Earl, who was a *bon-vivant*, and whose spirits were elated by the happiness he had received in again seeing Lady Mary resume her place at table, and likewise from the presence of the Sons of the Viscount, obliged them all to drink rather freely in honour of the day. His nephew, however, watched an opportunity of stealing away from a scene little congenial to the feelings of a lover: and when the Earl, and the rest of the gentlemen, joined the ladies in the drawing-room, they were agreeably surprised to find that the venerable Lady Dorothea Archdale had quitted her chamber, to partake of the universal joy of the family.

This mark of affection was particularly gratifying to her relations. Lady Angeline, who sat next to her, felt the deep blush tinge her cheek, as the old lady in the gar-

rulity of her years, after shaking hands with the Fortescue family, said:

"I have now but two wishes left: and they are, to see my Angeline become a wife and mother, and to embrace once more my beautiful Elvira."

Henry involuntarily cast a look at the modest girl, whose colour increased as the Earl requested her to take her harp: then turning to Lady Dorothea, he said gaily:

"My dear madam, your wishes are so rational, and so just, that they will be granted you I am certain. We only want Elvira here to make our happiness complete.—Robert, bring Angeline her harp."

Young Evelyn, however, flew to obtain it; and with a smile of satisfaction presented it to her ladyship.

"Well done, George," said the Earl: "you must now supply the place of Robert. Once Angeline and he were inseparables: but now, poor girl! she will have leisure to lament of her cruelty to Arlington."

Lady Angeline looked confused; and Henry felt distressed for her. She struck the chords of her harp, and soon drew the

attention of the whole circle on herself, as she sang with pathetic tenderness an old Irish melody.

"By heavens!" exclaimed the brother of Lady Mary to Henry, who stood next him, "she is a little angel. Never before have I seen so many attractions centered in one woman."

Henry was silent; but his heart assented to the exclamation of young Evelyn, whose eyes remained fixed on the little graceful form before him. Lord Desmond led Miss Fortescue to supply her place: and his mother, whose affection had induced her, though far from well, to be present at the introduction of the Fortescue family, gazed first on one, then on the other, with mingled sorrow and delight—delight to be a witness to their happiness; sorrow at the recollection of years long since gone by, when, like Cecil, she received the vows of the Viscount, and listened with romantic enthusiasm to all he uttered.

Soon she retired to her chamber, unwilling by her speaking features to cast a damp on their present felicity. The thorn

remained in her side; it could not be extracted. The absence of the Viscount, his self-denial, his resolution to keep, with respect to himself, his solemn vow, and the conviction that he still loved her, was keenly felt by Lady Desmond. She rang for Phœbe, who with her old lover was enjoying the hospitality of the Earl.

"Well, my good Phœbe," said she, "this is a day we little expected to see. Has Robarts taken Goodall Farm?"

"I believe so, my lady," said Phœbe, colouring.

"That is right," replied her ladyship: "and you shall not go a portionless mistress to take care of it: neither shall you be wholly dependent even upon such an excellent creature as Robarts. Tell him from me, that I shall be present at your wedding, and provide every thing for the occasion: and you, my dear Phœbe, shall receive two hundred a-year from this day. Here is your first quarterly allowance," said she, putting a Bank note of fifty pounds in her hand; "and this my dear Phœbe will dispose of as she thinks proper." It was a

pocket-book, with notes to the amount of five hundred pounds.—"Nay, do not speak, Phœbe. I know your heart; but mine tells me that affection and fidelity such as your's can never be sufficiently rewarded. Go, go to Robarts, and enjoy the luxury of anticipated rapture."

Phœbe burst into tears as Lady Desmond gently pushed her out of the room, and went sobbing to her lover, who anxiously inquired the meaning of her tears. As soon as he had gathered from Phœbe what had passed, he joined her in expressions of gratitude and respect for her amiable mistress.

"Dearest Phœbe, you will not long refuse to reward my love. Your angel-mistress gives her consent to your becoming my wife: do not, therefore, delay an event which I hope, Phœbe, will give you as much pleasure as myself."

"Dear Robarts," replied Phœbe, "you shall not again reproach me: but do not let us shew an eagerness to quit the service of those for whom we have sacrificed so much. I promise to be your's. I can see

you every day, my dear Robarts; and I will become your wife when I think my mistress has found one to supply my place as an attendant. A trusty confidant she will not now require, yet even as your wife, my dear Robarts, I should be unhappy if I did not constantly see her, and still retain her confidence."

Robarts pressed her to his bosom.

"You are right, Phœbe, you are right; and I love you the better for your steady attachment to your lady. She alone is worthy of the Viscount; he alone is worthy of her."

Lord Fortescue, on the return of his children, listened with melancholy pleasure to the recital of their reception by the Earl: and Cecil, kissing the hand which held her own, said:

"Dear father, how I long to introduce to you Lady Angeline De Courci. To-morrow she is to call on me: May I, my father, hope that you will bestow on me that pleasure?—She is the being to create affection in every heart."

The Viscount kissed the rosy cheek of his daughter with parental fondness:

"I can see," said he, endeavouring to force a smile, "that my Cecil has already secured a friend.—Yes, my child, I will see this highly valued object of your regard.—May I, Henry, take your sister's word?"

"You may, indeed, my lord," replied his son. "Had Lady Angeline pleaded the cause of her cousin, she would have met with equal success."

"You have passed, perhaps unconsciously, Henry, the highest eulogium that can be paid to any woman. I feel rather desirous to see this paragon of perfection, and promise you that I shall do every justice to her merits, though she is the daughter of one whose imprudence doomed me to a life of sorrow.—But no more of that, my children: I will not damp the pleasure which every countenance, even Julia's, betrays. Perhaps Lady Angeline resembles her matchless aunt: if so, she is indeed deserving of all your encomiums."

"When you see her, my lord," said Mrs.

Fortescue, "you will acknowledge the justice of our praise. Lady Angeline is not an every day character."

When the beloved friend of Miss Fortescue, attended by her cousin, paid her first visit to the Abbey, she was met by Henry and his brother. The former could not refrain from testifying the happiness he felt: gently pressing her hand, he conducted her, trembling with excessive diffidence, to where the rest of his family were assembled. Cecil sprang forward, and exultingly led her to the Viscount.

The blush of modesty which heightened the loveliness of an angel's face, the heaven of sweetness of feeling which her fine blue eyes expressed; the timid hesitation of a voice calculated to disarm the fiercest anger, were separately seen and felt by the father of Cecil. But above all, the strong resemblance she bore to Lady Desmond rendered the child of his enemy instantaneously dear to him. All the apprehensions of Lady Angeline vanished as the injured Viscount pressed her hand to his lips,

as she ventured to raise her eyes to his face, and saw the varying expression of his handsome features beaming with affection and admiration.

Again he kissed her trembling hand, and leading her to a couch, placed himself beside her: then calling Cecil away from her lover, he joined her hand with that of the delighted girl, who with difficulty refrained from shedding tears of rapture at being thu noticed by the man whose hard destiny she had ever lamented, whose good opinion she was most anxious to insure; and above all, by the father of Henry Fortescue.

"Dear girls," said the Viscount, gazing tenderly on each of them as he spoke, "may the friendship thus propitiously begun end but with your lives. I cannot part with your ladyship to-day, unless you are particularly engaged—Oh! if you knew what emotions your presence gives birth to, you would not wonder that like the rest of my family I seem enchanted while I gaze on you. Your ladyship has strangely infatuated all my children; but it is the here-

ditary quality of your house to take captive the human heart at first sight."

Henry with impatience waited the reply of Lady Angeline, and felt transported to see her willingly assent to the request of his father. He beheld with secret exultation that she had completely charmed the Viscount, who scarce took his eyes from her interesting and lovely face; and anticipated with more than brotherly affection the treat his father would receive, could she be persuaded to disclose the "hidden soul of harmony." Sidney and himself were the most silent of the company; yet were their thoughts equally bent upon the Daughters of the Earl.

Sidney, though attached to his wife by every sentiment of durable affection, yet vainly endeavoured to banish from his remembrance the seducing form of Lady Elvira, now brought again to his memory by the unexpected intercourse of the two families. He saw the tender interest her sister had excited in the breast of his father, and he could not avoid wish-

ing to know what would be the effect of her witching charms, were they but seen by the Viscount.

Sidney knew not, or at least would not have believed, that all perfect as Lady Elvira's person was, yet his father would have viewed it with indifference. She possessed not the power to enchant a heart devoted to her aunt. It was a refinement of mind and manners, a natural tenderness of heart, a delicacy of form and feature, that shrunk from the bold freedom of fashionable life, which pleased Lord Fortescue and his youngest son, and which rendered Lady Angeline beloved by them both at the first interview; while Sidney, equally conscious of her endearing qualities, yet could not forget the impression her beautiful sister had made on his heart, could not avoid paying to her superior beauty a preference, which the cooler mind of his brother refused to acknowledge.

A servant had been dispatched to the Castle with a note intimating their intention of passing the day at the Abbey; and

Lady Angeline's maid was desired to send Bessy with a change of dress. On her arrival the two friends retired to the chamber of Miss Fortescue, when, after the important business of the toilet was completed, and they had mutually given way to the fulness of their hearts, Cecil led her friend across the picture-gallery into the suite of rooms belonging to her youngest brother; those very rooms which she had visited with her imprudent sister. Henry was in his dressing-closet, and knew not of their entrance.

"Come in, dear Angeline," said Cecil, "my brother has a choice selection of plants, and I want to rob him of a flower or two to decorate our bosoms."

Lady Angeline cast a trembling glance over the apartment. The single myrtle on the study table attracted her notice, and she involuntarily moved towards it.

"I would give any thing," said his sister, "to know why that tree is selected from the rest: it evidently possesses some secret charm; for Henry would not allow

me to touch a leaf belonging to it for the world. Here, Angeline, come and choose for yourself.—Will you have this beautiful rose-bud?"

"Do not pluck it," replied her ladyship: "your brother may be offended: and indeed it is a pity to rob him of what he is so partial to."

"Henry is too sweet tempered to feel hurt at trifles," said his sister: "but let him speak for himself."

Her brother now entered, and was agreeably surprised by their appearance.

"I want Lady Angeline to have this rose-bud, Henry; but she fears you will be displeased if I pluck it."

"You little plunderer," cried her brother, affectionately kissing her cheek, "you are welcome to all but that one tree:" pointing to the myrtle on the table. Then breaking off the best rose-bud he could find, with some flowering myrtle, he presented them to Lady Angeline; at the same time assuring her that all were at her service, except that which he had just mentioned.

Lady Angeline placed the flowers in her throbbing bosom, and raising her eyes met those of Henry—both coloured:

"Now, dear Harry, do tell me the history of that myrtle-tree, do, dear brother," and she threw her arms round his neck: "I shall die with curiosity, unless you gratify it."

"I think I can find a remedy for that, my sweet girl," said he, gaily: "Desmond, come forth, and relieve me from this little tormentor."

His lordship, who had been dressing himself in an adjoining chamber, gladly obeyed, and Cecil soon forgot to importune her brother concerning the solitary myrtle. Lord Desmond, however, could not refrain from whispering in the ear of his cousin: "You and Henry Fortescue appear to have an equal fondness for the myrtle: you know, Angeline, it is a tree sacred to love."

The deep suffusion of her cheeks was noticed by the brother and sister:

"We have half an hour to spare before

dinner," said Henry: "shall we pass it in the garden?"

To this they assented, and the son of Lady Emma, taking the unreluctant hand of Miss Fortescue, consigned his cousin to the care of her brother.

They had gained the shrubbery-walk, which led to Henry's rustic seat, when Cecil paused for a moment, until her ladyship came up to them:

"Dearest Angeline," said she, "how little did I expect this unlooked-for bliss! Now can I lean on your arm, now can I enjoy the rapture of your society, and my dear father sanctions our intimacy."

Lady Angeline looked archly in the face of her friend, and said:

"That speech, my dear Cecil, was meant for Robert rather than myself."

"You wicked girl," replied her friend, colouring, "I did not expect ——"

Her lover hurried her forward, and the sentence remained unfinished. Henry smiled:

"My sister," said he, "is rightly served, for much as she rejoices in being able to

converse freely with a friend so beloved as yourself; yet I certainly think at that moment Lord Desmond was the chief object of her thoughts. My own feelings, Lady Angeline, have held me silent upon the joyous re-union of our families; but, perhaps, you have done me the justice to lay it to the right cause, if, indeed, you have honoured me with a thought, and if you have generously pardoned me for my seeming cruelty to your cousin on the night I spoke to him in the boat."

Lady Angeline turned aside her head: she had no veil to conceal her confusion, and Henry beheld with fond admiration the varying tints of her fair and delicate countenance.

"May I hope," he continued, "that a mind like your's would rightly estimate the motives of my conduct on that occasion. Say, dearest Lady Angeline, have you pardoned me for my apparent inattention to your wishes?"

"Let us forget the painful scene of that night," said she, in a tremulous voice:

" let us only remember the happy change in my dear cousin's prospects. It is not for you, Mr. Fortescue, to ask my pardon: I certainly was the aggressor, and the one chiefly to blame on that occasion. The warmth of my affection for my cousin led me to forget for a moment, but only a moment, the deep sense of the obligation I owe you."

" Talk not of obligation," replied the son of the Viscount: " I am indebted to you for more than I dare express. Ah! Lady Angeline! and do I indeed taste the exquisite, the long wished-for delight of seeing you the friend of my sister? of feeling that the heart of my father acknowledges your merits, and of entertaining a hope that I may be allowed to prove myself not wholly unworthy your friendship, which it shall be my study to gain? You are silent. Have I hoped too much? If I have, crush at once the aspiring thought, and let me know my fate."

" The brother of Cecil, the guardian angel of my beloved but imprudent Elvira,

can entertain little doubt of my friendly sentiments," replied her ladyship: "I must be the most ungrateful of human beings, were I insensible to the claim you have upon my esteem."

Henry sighed; but it was not a fit time for him to ask for more than esteem from Lady Angeline. The dinner-bell reminded them it was requisite to return; and they were now joined by Lord Desmond and Miss Fortescue, whose countenances expressed all the rapture of sanctioned affection.

Again the Viscount fixed his pensive eyes on the sweet face of Lady Angeline: he placed her on one side of him, and Mrs. Aveland on the other, while Cecil sat between her lover and Henry—the picture of felicity. Gratified by the kind attention of Lord Fortescue, Lady Angeline lost part of her natural diffidence, and discovered, as she conversed with him, an elegant and highly cultivated mind. Ever solicitous to please those whose age commanded respect, she gained the good opinion of both the

General and Mrs. Aveland, while the animated and happy wife of Sidney expressed, by a variety of trifles, her attachment to the amiable sister of the beautiful inconstant.

The admiration of the Viscount increased as he saw the graceful contour of her figure displayed at the harp. He viewed her beautifully formed arm, and soft white hand, as it swept with a master's touch the chords of the instrument; and when she accompanied it with her soul-subduing voice, he almost fancied that he beheld a being of the other world—so pure and perfect she appeared. He laid his hand on the shoulder of Henry, whose eyes were intently fixed on the same captivating object.

"Had my volatile Sidney attached himself to such a woman as Lady Angeline, our Julia would never have become his wife. The heart that could once devote itself to this enchanting girl could never love another."

What could be more delightful to the feelings of Henry than this just tribute paid

by his father to the long cherished idol that had first awakened in his bosom the passion of love? Both father and son stood thoughtfully gazing on the lovely cousin of Lord Desmond. So strongly did she bring to the recollection of the Viscount what her aunt had been at her age, that he fancied it was indeed his adored Emma before him; and when it was time for her to depart, he felt uneasy at the idea of losing sight of her.

The pleasure-boat was ordered to be got ready to convey them to the Castle. Henry took the hand of Lady Angeline, while Lord Desmond lifted in his sister.

"You will not now refuse to let me see you safe to the opposite shore?" said he, in a voice of tenderness, as he gently pressed her hand.

"Oh, no!" she replied, smiling sweetly on him: "I will now accept your offer with pleasure, as there no longer exists any dread of your incurring the sin of disobedience."

"My father seems so enchanted with

you," said Henry, "that you will make us all jealous of his affection. Yet, Lady Angeline, he cannot love you more than you deserve."

"Do not turn flatterer, I beseech you!" exclaimed her ladyship: "I have been accustomed only to hear truth and sincerity from your lips, and I shall regret if you have recourse to any thing else."

"Contrary to your advice, my dear Angeline," said Lord Desmond, "I mean to take advantage of this beautiful harvest-moon, and shew Cecil the root-house, nor shall I dread the influence you seem to attribute to it."

They landed; and his lordship, eager to be the first to enter it, almost carried Miss Fortescue to the place. Such haste would have been unnecessary, had he noticed the changeful countenance of his cousin and Henry Fortescue, had he observed their lingering on the spot where the latter had restored to Lady Angeline her too beautiful sister.

While Lord Desmond was pouring forth

his soul in tenderness to the blushing daughter of the Viscount, and while she with bashful modesty confessed her own affection, her brother, softened by the remembrance of what he had felt from the display of Lady Angeline's artless gratitude, inquired in a tone, which thrilled through every nerve, if she had any particular aversion to so charming a spot.

"Never!" he exclaimed: "had I dared hope for the bliss of revisiting it again, of enjoying your presence. Ah! I cannot be deceived in you, Lady Angeline. It is that delicacy of mind which first ——"

He stopped suddenly, recollecting that he was on the point of betraying more than he wished. Her ladyship trembled:

"Say," he continued, "am I not right —your dislike of this pleasing retreat proceeds from the remembrance of Sidney's imprudence?"

Lady Angeline felt the delicacy of Henry in avoiding to mention the name of her sister.

"I confess," said she, timidly, "that

beautiful as the root-house certainly is, yet I never enter it without a sensation of pain. It reminds me of the misery of those I love and revere, and of the imprudence of a beloved relation. Oh! Mr. Fortescue, you cannot be ignorant to whom I allude: never can I efface from my memory that dreadful, that disgraceful scene at the Villa. How keenly have I lamented that you should be a witness to the madness of my dear Elvira; that you, above all other beings, should be a spectator of her momentary insanity. But, thank God, she is now deserving of all our affections: she is now free from that fatal passion which threatened her existence: she is now sensible of her fault, and of her husband's worth; and even your heart, prejudiced as it must be against her, will yet esteem her."

"Angelic creature!" cried Henry, pressing her hand to his lips, "my heart has not deceived me: you are every thing my warm imagination pictured of female excellence. Oh! that your virtuous hopes may prove true; that Lady Elvira may re-

pay all your anxiety. She is your sister, and that alone would interest me in her welfare."

Some one now advanced, and Henry to his vexation perceived it to be Captain Evelyn. Immediately catching the hand of her ladyship, he proceeded to tell her how miserable he had passed the day, without being enlivened by her presence. Lady Angeline, who bore his nonsense and freedom with her usual sweetness, on account of his being the favourite brother of Lady Mary, told him that he paid but a bad compliment to the family at the Castle.

"It is true, upon my soul," said he, passing her arm under his own. "I have been so wretchedly possessed with ennui, that I verily believe I must throw up my commission, and take up my residence entirely with the Earl, for I find it impossible to exist without you."

Henry gave him a look bordering on contempt, as he walked silently on the other side of Lady Angeline, who made no reply to the rodomontade of young Evelyn. They

now entered the spacious and magnificent saloon of the Castle.

"Ah, Angeline!" said the Earl, "it is well you are returned, for George has been half tempted to hang himself during your absence."

"Indeed! my dear uncle," said her ladyship, with an expressive look; "that would have been a pity, considering how many fine ladies would break their hearts upon the occasion. Captain Evelyn will make me grow vain, I am afraid."

"Never mind him, my dear Angeline," said Lady Mary, "you know he means no harm, it is only his way."

"Oh, I acquit him of any meaning," cried her ladyship, with vivacity: "but how is my little darling?"

"Your little darling will be made a christian of in a few days," replied the Earl; "and perhaps, as a pledge of amnesty, Mr. Fortescue will be his godfather."

"With pleasure," said Henry, taking the offered hand of the Earl, "and consider myself honoured by the selection."

"You do us honour," replied his lordship. "Robert and Angeline will be the other sponsors for my little grandson. I shall feel my happiness increased by the presence of your brothers and sisters on this joyous occasion. Angeline, I wish you to write to-morrow to Lady Elvira and Everard. Tell them if they will come down to the Castle, we will delay the ceremony until their arrival."

What a task for Lady Angeline; yet it must be performed. Hitherto she had daily put off writing to her sister, fearful that the intelligence she should be obliged to communicate, and which had rendered herself so happy, would wound afresh the bosom of Lady Elvira. With extreme tenderness for the feelings of her imprudent sister, she sat down, after she had retired for the night, to execute the wishes of her uncle, and waited her reply with a degree of nervous impatience not natural to her disposition. It came, and brought an excuse. The mother of Mr. Wrottesley was greatly indisposed, and Lady Elvira, who

was her chief nurse, could not leave the Countess until she was restored to a state of convalescence. She coldly touched upon the news of the re-union of the once hostile families, and concluded by supposing that she should see her sister in Town soon after Christmas.

Lady Angeline knew not what to think of this strange letter: she nevertheless allowed herself to hope that her sister had completely conquered her unhappy passion, and that when she again met Sidney, it would be without any other sentiment than what his merits deserved. The Earl, disappointed in his desire of having his favourite niece present at the christening of his grandson, openly expressed so much vexation to Lord Reginald and his wife, that they both immediately requested that the naming of their infant hope might be deferred until their return to Town, when all their family could be present. This was agreed to by Lord De Courci with evident satisfaction: he wrote himself to Lady Elvira, fixing their departure for the first week in January.

Lady Desmond, anxious to reward the constancy of Robarts and his Phœbe, desired that their marriage might be celebrated on the day which was to have been the christening. With her usual sweetness she graced the ceremony with her presence: Lady Angeline and Miss Fortescue also honoured the grateful Phœbe, by being her bridemaids; and Robarts at length conducted the long-cherished object of his affections to Fortescue Farm, that being the name by which it afterwards was known.

In the happiness of this deserving pair both the Viscount and the innocent victim of his vow found relief to their own private sorrows: not a day hardly elapsed without Robarts seeing his revered master, or Phœbe her beloved mistress; and they heard with sensations of genuine pleasure that it was the intention of Lady Desmond and the Viscount to remain the principal part of the year in the country. The former yielded to the solicitations of Lord Reginald and his wife, and agreed once more to consider as her home the mansion of her ancestors,

while Lady Dorothea seemed to receive fresh health and spirits by this determination of her amiable relative; and only expressed, as usual, her two wishes—that she might embrace her beautiful Elvira, and behold her gentle favourite well settled in life.

Lord Desmond now daily enjoyed the delightful society of his Cecil; and the Viscount, who secretly hoped to end his life at the Abbey, and who wished never to leave its venerable walls and romantic solitude, became so strongly attached to the son of his early love, that he felt desirous to have him always near him. His tenderness was amply returned by Lord Desmond, and Cecil felt an increase of affection for her lover, on discovering that he had purchased a fine seat, lately become vacant by the death of its owner abroad, expressly that their residence should be near her father, its distance being only two miles from the Abbey.

The Viscount, pleased by this mark of kindness in his intended son-in-law, gave

his consent to his receiving the hand of his daughter early in March. Out of delicacy to Lady Desmond, he forbore wounding her by his presence on that occasion, and determined therefore to continue at the Abbey, whither the happy couple were to repair after the ceremony was over.

The General and Mrs. Aveland promised to remain with their highly-valued friend during the absence of his children, who would of course pass the chief part of their time in Portland Place, after the Christmas holidays were over. Lord Desmond wished his beloved Cecil to consult her own taste in the furniture, ornaments, and necessary preparations for their nuptials. The Viscount therefore consented to her accompanying Sidney and his wife to Town two days after the departure of the Earl and his family from the Castle.

Henry heard of this arrangement with inward satisfaction. The affectionate intercourse of the two houses gave him constant opportunities of discovering some new charm, some fresh virtue in Lady Ange-

line; her taste, manners, and habit of life, were all congenial to his own, and nothing but the delicacy of his situation withheld him from discovering the impression she had made on his heart. He saw Captain Evelyn depart to join his regiment with considerable pleasure: he had ever disliked the freedom of his manners, but it gave him no small matter of concern to hear that he was likely to become a constant guest in Grosvenor-square. Lord Desmond, the chief companion of Cecil, now allowed Henry many a delightful tête-à-tête with his cousin; but so guarded were his actions and expressions, that nothing but his eyes betrayed the admiration he felt. These, however, her natural diffidence in herself prevented her from translating favourably to her wishes, and when any fond hope agitated her gentle bosom, she checked it by thinking him superior to the trifling attractions she might possess.

A few days before their departure for Town, Miss Fortescue and her youngest brother went to spend the day at the Cas-

tle: not finding those they expected in the drawing-room, Henry went to the apartments of Lord Desmond, and Cecil to those of her friend. She found her very busily employed in removing a young myrtle-tree from one pot to another, most elegantly painted. On examining it, Miss Fortescue discovered that the landscape represented the root-house, almost hid by the luxuriant foliage of its trees; and on the other side was the Abbey, and the rich scenery of the lake. She could not refrain from expressing her admiration of the painting, and learnt that it was the performance of Lady Angeline. Cecil, on hearing the voice of her brother and Lord Desmond in the gallery, waited not for her friend's permission, but hastily called them in, to shew Henry this specimen of her ladyship's talents. It was impossible not to be charmed by the beauty of the design, yet the little tree it contained soon fixed all the attention of Henry.

"Do not touch it, if you value Angeline's favour," said her cousin, smiling.

"I know not the secret history of this myrtle, but I believe Angeline would never forgive any one that was to violate its sacredness by their touch."

Henry felt an indescribable sensation at these words of Lord Desmond—he raised his eyes to the crimson cheek of Lady Angeline, when remembering his own dear loved tree, he cast them on the ground with a confusion he could not account for. Cecil, who witnessed the deep suffusion on the lovely face of her friend, rejoiced to hear the voice of the Earl calling for her lover; and Henry, to her great satisfaction, followed him. No sooner were they gone, than she took the hand of Lady Angeline, and affectionately pressing it, said, "Has this plant really any secret charm, my beloved Angeline? And may a friend like your Cecil inquire what it is?"

"Dear Cecil," replied her ladyship, colouring still deeper than before, "I would conceal nothing from you but my follies, and this is one of them; yet, perhaps, I am attaching more consequence to an act

of thoughtlessness than even you would do. You are of course perfectly acquainted with the whole of my sister's intimacy with your brother, but not perhaps with our visits to the Abbey before his arrival, and after his departure. The goodnatured Mrs. Thomson, to oblige my sister, conducted us over the Abbey, and amongst other things shewed us your brother Henry's plants. It was from one of those I unthinkingly gathered a sprig of myrtle: wishing to see if I was fortunate in rearing so delicate a shrub, I planted it on my return to the Castle, and it has well rewarded my care as you perceive. I have always refused to tell any thing concerning it, because it was a foolish action, and Robert in particular would plague me concerning it."

Miss Fortescue smiled significantly: "And did you gather it, dear Angeline, before you had seen my brother?"

Her ladyship looked extremely confused. Cecil flung her arms round the neck of her blushing friend, and kissing her cheek, affectionately said, "Do not fear my pru-

dence, my beloved Angeline, nor blush to acknowledge that the good qualities, and filial piety of Henry, rendered the theft valuable in your eyes."

Encouraged by the behaviour of Miss Fortescue, Lady Angeline ventured to raise her head, and request that she would not betray the little history of the myrtle to any human being.

"Trust me, my friend," replied Cecil; "I give you my word not to hint even at what you have told me. They say that a woman cannot keep a secret: but Henry knows that I am an exception to the saying."

Her ladyship looked inquisitively in the face of Miss Fortescue, who smiling said:

"It is true, Angeline, I assure you; but I must candidly own that I often feel strongly tempted to break the promise I made Harry; and yet he is so strange a being, that were I guilty of such a breach of trust, I verily believe that it would endanger his future peace."

"Some love affair, I dare say," replied

her ladyship, endeavouring to appear quite unconcerned.

"I passed my word not to drop the remotest hint of what it was," said the sister of Henry Fortescue: "and I am confident that you, Angeline, would be the last person in the world to approve, or even to listen to a violation of my promise."

Lady Angeline fully deserved this compliment: yet she could not avoid feeling a restless curiosity to learn whether the confidence Henry had reposed in his sister had any thing to do with those words he had uttered in the boat on the night of his interview with Lord Desmond. Sometimes she imagined that he might have felt a preference for some happy girl before his marriage with his cousin, and that soon as decency permitted he would avow his passion.

This idea daily gained strength in her mind; and it was this she supposed he had entrusted to his sister. Yet was the myrtle still cherished with the fondest care, and the volume of Petrarch read with

undiminished tenderness, as often as she was certain of being uninterrupted. Had she dared to encourage a hope that her own little form had found favour in the sight of Henry, the marked affection of his father would have been doubly gratifying. The Viscount openly expressed his regard for her; and on taking leave the night before her departure for London, gave her the strongest proof of regard and parental kindness.

"I shall not see you again," said he, "for several months, unless your ladyship will, in consideration of the loss I shall sustain by your absence, return with my daughter and Lord Desmond. Will you, however, trust yourself with me for a few minutes?" inquired he, smiling mournfully as he spoke.

She rose and followed the Viscount to his private apartments; when closing the door, he took her hand, and pressing it to his lips, said in a voice of melting tenderness:

"Never, since the days of my boyhood,

when my whole soul was devoted to one object, until now, have I seen the woman capable of reminding me of her I then lost. Dear Lady Angeline, think it no trifling praise when I assure you that until I saw you, until I heard the sweet and soothing tones of your voice, until I beheld the pure and innocent heart, untainted by the fashionable levity of the present day, I had imagined that there existed not a being worthy to be compared to my first and dearest love. Lady Angeline, I have narrowly observed you, and I think you as faultless as your inestimable aunt."

"Oh! my lord," cried the delighted girl, "you have bestowed on me the highest of all possible praise; and it shall be my constant study to deserve it."

"Sweet girl!" said Lord Fortescue, sighing, "to-morrow I shall not hear the magic tones of thy melodious voice: miles will divide me from the being of my heart's adoption. Yet let me live in thy memory; for I confess it would occasion me the deepest sorrow, did I suppose that absence

would estrange your thoughts from the solitary exile of the Abbey."

He then unlocked a small ivory cabinet inlaid with gold, and with a trembling hand took from it a casket. For a minute he paused, then making an effort to subdue his feelings, he opened it, and exposed to her view a variety of beautiful jewels.

"These," said the Viscount, in a broken voice, "were designed for my betrothed bride."

Lady Angeline started, and turned pale.

"They were never presented to her; and my heart would not permit me to dispose of them even to my Cecil. You alone are worthy of what was meant as a present to Lady Emma. "Take, then, beloved Angeline, what you like best from amongst them: they will not suit the fashion of the present day; but they will bring to your recollection one who truly feels your value."

"I cannot, indeed, my lord," replied Lady Angeline, turning on him her blue eyes filled with tears of sensibility and

grateful affection. "I am not worthy to possess what was meant for my matchless aunt. Forgive me, but it seems like a sacrilege to touch them. I require no trinket, my lord, to remind me of your flattering kindness; and only regret that I am incapable of proving, or even of expressing what I feel—what I have always felt for your lordship."

"Dear little angel!" cried the Viscount, clasping her with a father's fondness to his bosom, "no woman but yourself shall ever be mistress of these jewels. If you refuse me now, I shall consign them to this casket until you bestow your hand on some highly favoured man, who will gain a treasure richer than all the jewels of the world. Then, Angeline, you will not refuse to accept the whole of them."

Her ladyship, greatly affected by this distinguished mark of Lord Fortescue's regard, pressed his hand to her lips, and again repeated that he would ever be remembered by her with grateful affection. His lordship, however, obliged her to ac-

cept a valuable amethyst ring, which he himself placed on the third finger of her left hand, saying:

"Condescend, my lovely friend, to wear this little gift until it is necessary to remove it for one of less intrinsic worth; but which will be more valuable as being the symbol of Hymen."

Lady Angeline blushed; and the Viscount gently drawing on her glove, which concealed the sparkling present, conducted her back to the drawing-room.

Lord Fortescue smiled as he beheld the inquisitive faces of his children.

"I feel that I am an object of envy," said he, "in being privileged to enjoy without censure a tête-à-tête with Lady Angeline. Nevertheless, curious as you all appear to be to hear the result of our private conference, I shall, with her ladyship's permission, keep you in ignorance until a future time.—Ah! Cecil, that saucy smile puts my resolution at defiance, and says in plain terms, that it is only requisite to be alone with your friend a few minutes

to discover this mighty secret of your father's."

Miss Fortescue kissed the extended hand of the Viscount, then seated herself by the side of her lover; while Henry felt depressed at the thought of losing Lady Angeline's society only for the few days they were to remain behind; and as he gazed on her mild and heavenly countenance, saw in idea the train of new admirers she would secure to herself, as she appeared a second winter in the gay world more improved in height, and more lovely than ever.

Lord Desmond was to remain, and accompany Miss Fortescue and her brothers in time for the christening; while his mother, to oblige the Earl, consented to pass ten days in London, during which time his little idol would be named. After that she was to return to the Castle, to her old friend Lady Dorothea Archdale, whose infirmities alone kept her from making one among the company on that happy occasion, and folding to her maternal bosom her beautiful niece.

Phœbe, the happy wife of Robarts, could not restrain her tears as her mistress called at Fortescue Farm to take leave of her: and though she assured her that her stay would not exceed ten days, yet Phœbe could hardly be comforted; for she had never, until she became the wife of Robarts, been separated a day from Lady Desmond for thirty years. Her husband's presence, however, reminded her that she ought to repress her feelings; and for him she dried her tears, and assumed an air of cheerfulness. Lady Angeline, whose hand she was about to kiss, threw herself into her arms.

"Dear Phœbe," said she, "I almost envy you the calm and tranquil life you lead: were it not for the happiness I shall feel in seeing my sister, I should quit the country and its dear retirement with regret. Ah! my dear Mrs. Robarts, pity poor me: already have I undergone the penance of passing one winter in London; and I am now compelled to go through a second: to to mingle constantly amongst a crowd of insignificant and heartless beings, to listen

to a parcel of unmeaning nonsense, or some tale of scandal, while politeness alone obliges me to be a silent hearer.—Oh! how I hope that after this season I may be permitted to enjoy the chief wish of my heart—a country life."

Lady Angeline, indeed, possessed so little relish for the dissipations of London, that she quitted the Castle with a lowness of spirits, which the thought of meeting with a beloved, but imprudent sister, and perhaps, also, one other being, had alone the power to dissipate. During the journey she became the chief nurse of her little godson, who was not less dear to her on account of the name he was so soon to receive. Her ladyship, with her little pet, and the rest of her family, arrived in perfect health at the noble mansion of her uncle, in Grosvenor Square.

CHAPTER III.

The news of their arrival was immediately made known to Lady Elvira and Mr. Wrottesley, who the same day paid their respects to the Earl, his son, and Lady Mary.

At the well-known sound of her sister's voice, Lady Angeline flew to embrace her: but the warm feelings of her heart were chilled instantaneously by the cold air of the beautiful inconstant. A tear started into the eyes of her sister, who almost disbelieving her own senses at the indifference she had witnessed, turned towards Mr. Wrottesley, who, with all the tenderness of a brother, clasped the mortified girl to his bosom. Cheered by his affection, she once more cast a glance on Lady Elvira. She had just taken the son of Lady Mary from

his nurse; and after kissing the rosy cheek of the laughing infant, returned him to her arms, with a compliment on his beauty.

"I was sorry, my dear uncle," said her ladyship, "to be obliged to refuse your kind invitation, but Lady Dorrington was so extremely ill that I could not leave her: and since then we have been on a visit to Lady Anna, who was prevented from attending her mother by her own confinement, which happened just at that time."

"Your presence, my dear Elvira," replied her uncle, "was alone wanting to render our happiness complete. Lord Fortescue has generously made a sacrifice of all personal feeling. The two houses are once more united in their hereditary bonds of love and friendship: and in March the union will be made stronger by the marriage of Robert with Miss Fortescue. Do you not rejoice at so unexpected an event?"

"Certainly," said her ladyship, with seeming carelessness. "I always thought

it a foolish thing altogether; for if my father was to blame in that affair, it was ridiculous to expect that the children of each family were to keep up the hatred of their parents."

"It does not appear that they have been so inclined," replied the Earl; "for love, not hate, has been the predominant sentiment that has filled their bosoms." Lady Elvira coloured. "We expect them in Town in a day or two," continued the Earl; "and then, Wrottesley, you will have your wish. I will let you know of their arrival, and assure you, that in the Sons of the Viscount you will find minds of no common order. Elvira will also be charmed with the wife of Sidney, who pleases more and more every time you are in her company."

Mr. Wrottesley with sincerity replied that he knew of few circumstances which had afforded him more pleasure than the re-union of the families; and that he should be happy in an opportunity of evincing the regard he had always felt for them.

During this conversation, Lady Mary inquired of Lady Elvira if she did not think her sister had grown taller than when she last saw her.

"We all agree that she is very much improved," said she; "and my brother George, who passed some time at the Castle, has lost his heart most completely; but I believe, poor fellow, that he is doomed to wear the willow."

Lady Elvira encountered the sweet reproachful eyes of her sister—their tenderness, their tearful lustre, brought the blush into her cheek. She took the hand of Lady Angeline, and pressing it, said:

"I think she is very much grown, but I did not expect to see the same pensive cast of countenance: the happy hours she must have spent at the Abbey ought to have dimpled her face with smiles. How is it, Angeline, that your features still wear the same thoughtfulness? But I shall expect you to-morrow to breakfast with me, if you are disengaged."

"To-morrow, my dear sister, I will at-

tend you," replied Lady Angeline, "and then perhaps you will have no cause to reprove me for my thoughtfulness. Surely, when I hastened down at the sound of your voice, Elvira, my countenance then only spoke the warm language of affection."

Lady Elvira understood her, and felt conscious that her own frigid conduct had damped the spirits of her sister, but the heart of her ladyship was torn by contending emotions. True to her promise, she had remained at Dorrington Park until her visit to her sister-in-law; yet could she not banish from her mind the memory of the past. Courted and caressed by the circle at the Park, and idolized by her husband, she yet was miserable. On receiving the intelligence of the hostile families being again reconciled she felt a double pang: had she proved faithful and patient, twelve months would have seen her the wife of Sidney, with the consent of the Viscount. Her own rashness, caprice, and inconstancy of mind, had led her to unite her fate to one who alone possessed her person. Her

heart, such as it was, full of errors, full of wanderings, was in spite of religion, reason, and morality, nay, in spite of herself, was devoted to Sidney.

Although the letter of Lady Angeline was couched in the most delicate terms; though she forbore to express her own pleasure lest she should pain her imprudent sister, yet Lady Elvira no sooner finished reading it, than she felt envious of the situation of her gentle sister, and doubted not that she would forget her, and every thing else, in the felicity of seeing and conversing with the family of Lord Fortescue. Her unkind suspicions were confirmed by Lady Angeline's not writing so frequently as usual; and though this very remissness proceeded from affection to herself, since when she wrote she was obliged to mention the sons of the Viscount, yet Lady Elvira ungenerously attributed it to a less amiable motive, and from that hour Lady Angeline by degrees lost her power over the heart and mind of her sister.

It was this that produced that coldness in the manners of Lady Elvira which so sensibly affected the affectionate and lovely favourite of Mr. Wrottesley. Anxiously she expected an explanation as she attended next morning the breakfast-table of Lady Elvira. Here again the brotherly attentions of Mr. Wrottesley soothed the spirits of Lady Angeline, who in vain turned her eyes on her sister for similar demonstrations of kindness. Conscious that she had not merited such treatment, she at length rallied her sinking spirits, and directing all her conversation to the husband of her silent sister, she inquired after some of the most estimable of her female acquaintance.

"The Duchess of Aimhigh," said Mr. Wrottesley, "is returned from Scotland, and with her daughters have been asking after you. Of course they will be at the christening, when you will learn all the fashionable chit-chat of the day. The Earl told me he had issued five hundred cards for that night's ball."

"Is the Marquis returned with her Grace?"

"Yes, but he is gone down to visit his mother, who has been passing her Christmas at the Duke of Auburn's. I am glad, Angeline, to hear you inquire after him."

"And I am surprised," said Lady Elvira, who had hitherto been silently playing with a favourite lap-dog. "I thought she had forgotten all her old friends, so much is she taken up by her new ones."

"Come, come, Elvira," said he, "I know you are vexed because Lady Angeline latterly has not corresponded so regularly as usual, but I will leave you for a couple of hours to make it up."

He rose and quitted the breakfast-parlour: Lady Elvira rang the bell, ordered her carriage at three, then took up the newspaper, laid it down again, and coldly asked what sort of man was the Viscount.

"Before I answer your question, my dearest Elvira, you must first tell me the cause of your present unkindness. What have I done to deserve this chilling indifference?

Oh! Elvira, after being separated for months, how little did I expect that our first meeting would be productive of reproaches."

"Rather," said her ladyship haughtily, "let me ask you what right you have to complain of coldness on my part, when you were so much enchanted by your new friends, that you could hardly find time to write as usual to your sister. A pretty farce has been acting at the Castle, I dare say, and the dénouement will be the marriage of that pattern of filial piety and worldly prudence, Henry Fortescue, with the pensive, moralizing, Lady Angeline De Courci, alias Mrs. Selby."

"I am sorry, my sister," replied the youngest daughter of the Earl rather warmly, "to percieve that self-love, not affection for me, is the origin of your displeasure. Before Everard you accused me of forgetting my old friends for new ones: I did not then choose to remind you, that had your accusation been just, the persons to whom you alluded were known to us

both before our presentation. Had you loved me with a regard such as mine for you, it would have taught you the cause of my relaxing in my correspondence; it would have warned you not to suspect an affection which yourself alone has the power to diminish. The latter part of your speech requires no comment; it is as unjust as your anger."

Lady Elvira, surprised at the spirited reply of her sister, thought proper to conceal her real sentiments; taking therefore the hand of Lady Angeline, she said in a softened tone of voice:

"Forgive me, my dear sister, if I have wronged you, but it was natural under my circumstances that I should feel hurt at what seemed indifference on your part. Had I loved you less, I should not have felt so keenly any thing like neglect: perhaps, also, the consciousness of how unworthily I had acted when we were last in Town added to my dread of being slighted by you."

This was sufficient to soften the mo-

mentary resentment of Lady Angeline: she threw her arms round the beautiful neck of her sister, and kissed tenderly her white and polished forehead, assuring her that her remissness arose from that very love which she had so much doubted. An unreserved explanation on the part of Lady Angeline soon convinced her sister that she was more than ever unworthy her affection.

Wholly incapable herself of returning such generous and delicate kindness, she resolved to add dissimulation to her other faults, and conceal from her unsuspecting sister the true state of her mind, while by her conversation and manners she effectually convinced her that all improper feelings with respect to Sidney were at an end, and that she was now become not only worthy the doating fondness of her husband, but the regard of the whole family.

Too pure and innocent to suspect the sincerity of Lady Elvira, her amiable sister without hesitation spoke of the Viscount, his children, and their domestic happiness;

while her own artless feelings prevented her from construing aright the changeful countenance of the lovely dissembler. Envious of the kindness the Viscount had shown Lady Angeline, the heart of her sister no longer felt the same affection for her, yet she had the address to talk and act as attached as usual, and Lady Angeline left her fully persuaded that she would meet Sidney with the sentiments of frindship only.

On the arrival of the family of Lord Fortescue, the Earl sent to Mr. Wrottesley and Lady Elvira, inviting them to dinner the next day, in order that they might be introduced as soon as possible.

The heart of her ladyship throbbed with expectation and vanity as she retired to her dressing-room. She ordered her maid to prepare the most becoming of her robes, and took particular care in the decoration of a person that wanted no ornament to set forth its beauty, except a mind as faultless as itself.

After Lady Elvira had dismissed her at-

tendant, she stood for a moment to contemplate her own fascinating figure. The swell of her snowy bosom, formed like the Medicean Venus, was only temporary concealed by a scarf of white lace, while the graceful contour of her limbs was displayed through a robe of the same materials, over a slip of pale pink silk: her round and beautiful arms, almost naked to the shoulder, as well as her neck, were ornamented with large pink topazes, and her dark hair was simply confined by a comb, decorated with the same.

More beautiful, more seducing than ever, she entered the drawing-room of her uncle. The deep suffusion of her cheek, the timid downcast look she assumed, so new, so unexpected, riveted Sidney to the spot where he stood.

The Earl took the hand of Lady Elvira, and presented her proudly to the sons of the Viscount, who each secretly confessed the power of her charms, now heightened by the irresistible attraction of modesty. Mrs. Fortescue was absent from a severe

cold, but Cecil, though fatigued by her journey, yet could not deny herself the pleasure of accompanying her brothers. Prejudiced as she was against the captivating sister of her friend, yet she now felt interested in her welfare: indeed, the whole appearance and manners of her ladyship were such, as had they been natural instead of artificial, must have rendered her not only the most beautiful, but the most dangerous woman of the age.

Lord De Courci, ignorant of what had once been the wishes of Sidney, placed him next her ladyship at table: politeness obliged him to attend to her, and he insensibly entered into conversation with the woman, who, but for her own follies, had ever held the first place in his heart. Studious to appear all that Lady Angeline was by nature, she with trembling hesitation replied to his questions, and, as if by accident, not design, raised her large and beautiful blue eyes to the face of Sidney, then colouring deeply, cast them down: but the magic glance had sunk into the heart of

Sidney. In vain he looked around for the presence of his wife to chace away the effect of those fascinating eyes: she was not there.

All the company were engaged in conversation about the christening ball which was to take place in a few days, except Lady Angeline, who sat between George Evelyn and the youngest son of the Viscount: she was, as usual, silent. Sidney saw the eyes of his brother fixed on her interesting face with tender admiration: he sighed almost unconsciously, and turned hastily to the sound of Lady Elvira's voice.

"What," said she, in a tone of trembling softness, "can call forth the sigh from a bosom so full of happiness as your's? Surely, Mr. Fortescue, you can have no cause to breathe a sigh, gratified as you are by every desire, every wish of your heart."

This speech was accompanied by a look so melting, and yet so free from boldness, that Sidney felt it necessary to re-

member that he had, indeed, no real cause to sigh, or to regret for a moment his situation in life.

He selected some fruit, and presented it to her ladyship, who accepted it, saying, "I little expected, Mr. Fortescue, that I should ever enjoy the happiness of this day, of seeing you at my uncle's table. May I hope that as all animosity is buried in oblivion on the part of our relations, so is the remembrance of my shameful imprudence?" She hesitated for an instant, then continued. "May I hope that you will cease to remember how unworthy I once was of your esteem, and honour me with your friendship in common with the rest of my family?"

"I shall always be happy to be considered in the delightful character of your ladyship's friend," replied Sidney, "and I may venture also to promise as much for Mrs. Fortescue, who will as soon as her cold permits call and assure you of her regard."

At the mention of Mrs. Fortescue's

name the cheek of Lady Elvira turned pale; recovering herself, however, she expressed herself honoured by his kindness. The ladies now rose to withdraw, and the Earl, who loved the pleasures of the table as well as any man, passed the bottle pretty freely; while Mr. Wrottesley, happy in being able openly to express his friendly sentiments for the sons of the Viscount, seconded the hospitality of his lordship, and drank the health of the absent Viscount with the highest respect.

Henry and Lord Desmond were the first to quit the table: the former, elevated by the wine he had unwillingly drank, seated himself by the side of Lady Angeline, who was nursing the infant son of Lady Mary, and amusing him by displaying the sparkling gift of Lord Fortescue.

"Ever amiable, ever attractive," said he, "yet your ladyship never appeared to greater advantage than in the delightful occupation of a mother. Your fondness for this little one leads me to think that were you in reality its parent, you

would not delegate to another the most tender of all human duties. Say, Lady Angeline, would you not, with such a companion as this innocent, prefer the calm scene of domestic bliss to the crowded ball-room, the Court, or any of those pleasures which seem the soul of the fashionable world?"

Her ladyship blushed, yet hesitated not to reply, that her own taste and wishes would lead her to retire wholly from London, and that with such a sweet playfellow as her little godson, and such society as the Castle afforded, she should never think it necessary to have recourse to the dissipations of London to enliven the winter season.

"And may I not hope that the society of the Abbey is included with that of the Castle?" inquired he tenderly.

"Certainly," she replied, blushing still deeper. "I have received so much kindness from the Viscount, that it would be the basest ingratitude on my part not to

own that his revered presence would enliven the dullest day. In his company I must always feel happy."

"Oh! that I possessed the delightful powers of my father," cried his son. "Heavens! Lady Angeline, what rapture, what felicity to be the being capable of rendering you happy."

His voice, his manner was touchingly expressive of his feelings, and Lady Angeline's heart throbbed with violence as the hope of being dear to him again stole into her mind. The ring of the Viscount failed to charm the baby any longer, and he was therefore consigned to the care of his nurse. Henry gently took the hand of her ladyship, and attempted to draw it off.

"You must not displace it," said she, smiling sweetly, "for it is the gift of a dear absent friend, and I promised that no one should take it off my finger until ———" She stopped suddenly, and coloured: she remembered that she had said too much. Henry raised her hand to his lips.

"Shall I finish your sentence, Lady Angeline?—until it was replaced by a simple one of the purest gold. Ah! I am right. Dearest Lady Angeline, will you forgive me, if I presume to inquire if this ring was the gift of a female friend?"

The entrance of the gentlemen, and the approach of George Evelyn, who came instantly to Lady Angeline, prevented her reply: but she read in the expressive eyes of Henry his disappointment. Mortified, he rose from his seat, which was immediately filled by the handsome brother of Lady Mary. Young Evelyn was in his regimentals, and looked uncommonly well: Lady Elvira thought he would be a pleasing acquisition to her parties, and accordingly joining him and her sister, gave him a general invitation to her house, which he gallantly accepted, vowing, at the same time, that he believed himself translated into Paradise, and placed between two angels.

"Beautiful Lady Elvira," said he, "why do you not attempt to infuse into

your sister a portion of your delightful spirits? Lady Angeline would then become the name of the Irresistible, and I should adore her more than ever."

"The pensive character becomes her best," replied Lady Elvira. "Does it not, Mr. Fortescue?"

Henry was passing at that moment, and having learnt the wish of the young soldier, answered, that her ladyship was too perfect to require any alteration, and that in his opinion she justly merited that title now.

"Will you permit me to lead you to your harp?" said he, turning to Lady Angeline, who instantly gave him her hand. Pressing it closely in his own, "Will you condescend to answer my question concerning the donor of this ring?" said he.

"I did not think you possessed so much curiosity," replied she, smilingly. "I assure you, however, that it was given me by one I love most sacredly; and that I know of only one thing which I possess

of more value in my eyes than this ring. It was not the gift of a lady."

Henry started and turned pale: the idea of its being the present of an absent lover now took possession of his mind, and he felt a faintness come over him. Lady Angeline took her harp, but even the witching tones of her voice failed to sooth his agitation. Rousing himself at the call of the Earl, he prepared to join his sister and Lady Mary in a trio; but the poison of jealousy had crept into his soul, and filled every avenue to his heart. For the remainder of the evening he was silent and dejected, nor was Sidney in much better spirits; he had again seen Lady Elvira, but not the bold and imprudent Elvira of the Villa; now she appeared modest, amiable, and delicate, at least in her manners; while the occasional display, as if by chance, of her luxurious person, fixed his senses, and he once felt a momentary regret that so much loveliness, so much personal perfection, was lost to him for ever. On his return home the tender wel-

come of his truly amiable Julia banished from his mind the fascinating form of his first love, and the natural goodness of his heart, and rectitude of his principles, triumphed over the short-lived fever of desire.

Henry, however, could not so readily overcome the disagreeable impression of the evening: he dreaded lest the heart of the only woman in the world he could taste happiness with was devoted to another, and he passed a sleepless night, harassed by the most tormenting and fruitless conjectures, as to who could be the man destined to possess so rich a treasure. In the morning he repaired to the chamber of his sister, and with some degree of confusion inquired if she was acquainted with the name of the person who had presented Lady Angeline with the amethyst ring.

"No, indeed," said she smiling, "nor have I even noticed it. But my dear Harry, do you think if there is any secret attached to that ring your sister would be-

tray it? No, no, Harry, I can keep a promise faithfully I assure you."

"Then it seems that you at least have made one to Lady Angeline."

"Perhaps I have," said she laughing, "and I mean to keep it, as well as that I gave you, my dear curious brother. Time, however, will, I trust, exonerate me from both."

Henry now felt himself more than ever convinced that Lady Angeline was attached to some one, and that Cecil was in her confidence; yet the smile upon his sister's face so ill agreed with the tenderness she had ever manifested for his happiness, that he was at a loss to account for the indifference she had just displayed. His uneasiness increased, and he mounted his horse in order to call at the Earl's, and, if possible, gain from Lady Angeline a further explanation concerning the cause of his vexation. He found her, however, listening with great earnestness to the conversation of a naval officer, whose features alone would have discovered him to be the

brother of Lady Mary, and of George Evelyn.

His entrance occasioned a momentary interruption: but after the usual inquiries concerning the health of his family, the officer proceeded in his narrative of the perils and dangers he had so lately escaped from shipwreck in one of the most dreadful storms that had happened in the memory of man. All listened to him with attention and interest: his person, pale from sickness, and still more from sorrow; his manners elegantly persuasive, and totally free from the bold effrontery of his younger brother, created in the breast of Henry an immediate interest. He sat between Lady Angeline and his sister, and Henry saw the tear of tender sympathy steal down the cheek of the former, as he recounted the hardships he had endured. "Can this be the donor of the ring?" thought Henry. "Can this be the absent lover of that angelic little creature, and for whom she rejected the highly advantageous offer of the Marquis?"

A servant was now dispatched for the infant hope of the family. Lady Angeline rising, took him from his nurse, and presented the sweet boy to his uncle, whose left arm being wounded in a recent gallant engagement, was hung in a sling, and disabled him from relieving her of her smiling burthen. He kissed the forehead of his little nephew, and then from a feeling of gratitude for the compassionate Lady Angeline, pressed her soft hand to his lips, saying in a low voice, which however was heard by the watchful son of the Viscount, "It is the consoling pity of such an angel as your ladyship that is the bright reward for all past perils and privations."

She blushed at the delicate compliment of the young hero, and hid her face in the bosom of her little favourite.

"You are restored to us, Frank, at the most welcome moment," said the Earl: "to-morrow, this, our first blessing, will be named, and your presence will increase our pleasure. I have only one favour to beg, that you will immediately order your servants

and baggage to be sent here; and in future consider this house as your home—George has already made it his head quarters."

The wounded hero bowing gracefully, accepted with evident satisfaction the kind offer of the Earl, and the fine eyes of Lady Mary sparkled with gratitude.

"And pray, my lord," said George Evelyn, "may I now inquire your reason for refusing me the honour of Lady Angeline's hand at the ball to-morrow evening?"

"Yes, George, certainly. I only wish to arrange partners for the first dances myself, after that you are at liberty to select whom you please. To-morrow will be the first of our public nights this season, and I wish every one to know the happy reunion of my family with that of Lord Fortescue. The sons of the Viscount will therefore oblige me, if they will honour my nieces by taking them for the first dances. Robert of course is already engaged to Miss Fortescue, and you, George, I mean to pre-

sent to one of the handsome daughters of the Duchess of Aimhigh, should they be disengaged."

"Very well, my lord, I obey you; but may I hope that your ladyship will favour me with your hand after you are at liberty to chuse for yourself?"

"I will not promise you," said she, "for I may not feel disposed to dance again until after supper; but if I should, you may depend on me for a partner."

"Thank you, thank you, divine Lady Angeline," said he, kissing her hand passionately. "I should be unable to exist unless you condescended to make me the envy of all mankind."

"As wild as ever, George," said his brother. "Your spirits I hope will never receive the severe check mine has sustained." A deep dejection marked his countenance as he said this.

Lady Mary rose, and tenderly kissed his sun-burnt cheek, while Henry forgot his suspicions, and felt interested in the sorrows of so young and apparently so amiable a

man. Rising to take leave, he offered him his hand with an air of friendly cordiality, and invited him to dine with the rest of the Earl's family in Portland-place three days after the christening. Captain Evelyn returned the affectionate pressure, and promised to accompany them.

After the departure of Henry, all but Lady Angeline and his sister left the drawing-room; the former rose to withdraw, but her friend detained her, saying, "My brother will have no reserves before my dear Angeline. To this beloved friend, my dear Frank, I am indebted for all the happiness I enjoy, since my Reginald never would have survived a continuance of his father's displeasure; and I should soon have followed him."

The brown cheek of Captain Evelyn assumed a ghastly hue: he passed his hand over his eyes, then grasping that of his sister, said, "My dearest Mary, your tender nature would have sunk under so severe a blow, while mine is doomed to struggle, to contend against the full tide of disap-

pointment and misery. Ah! Mary, your poor brother escaped from the dangers of the sea, the carnage of the battle, to find on shore the shipwreck of all his hopes, the ruin of his happiness. I distress you," said he, seeing the tearful countenances of his hearers. "And you, sweet sympathizing angel, lovely friend of my sister, how sacredly will I cherish the remembrance of your kind compassion. All that a broken heart can offer is your's."

"Dearest Frank," said Lady Mary, "you alarm me beyond measure: if the recital of what distresses you is not too much for your strength, you will at least receive comfort in the knowledge that you have friends who can enter into your sorrows, and do all in their power to soften and assuage them."

Captain Evelyn pressed her hand, and after a few minutes pause, began:

"You cannot have forgotten, my dear sister, that when I was last on shore, I confided to you my attachment for an ami-

able girl, and regretted that circumstances, and the distance of several miles, prevented my introducing her to your knowledge. So strong was my affection for this lovely and accomplished woman, that in the fervency of my passion, I entreated her to secretly become my wife before I again joined my ship. But though her heart, melted by my persuasions and its own tenderness, would have tempted her to yield, yet the consideration of my future welfare, which might be injured by such a step, if known to her parents, determined her to deny what love and rashness proposed.

"Trust to my constancy, dearest Francis,' said she, "and be assured that if my father once becomes acquainted with your real character, he will no longer withhold his consent to our union. Hope every thing from my love, and rest satisfied, that after this voyage I will become your's for ever.'

"Almost lifeless she tore herself from my arms, but not before I had sworn on her

lips eternal fidelity. Through the means of a confidential friend of each, we corresponded, and I heard regularly from my beloved Sophia, until I was unfortunately shipwrecked. Few of my brave fellows survived the horrors of that night. I was saved by the gallant exertions of Captain Stanley, who had me conveyed on board his own ship, and to whose humanity and friendship I owe my life. On our return home, we encountered a French frigate of superior force, and after an obstinate resistance on both sides, gained the glory of making her strike to the British flag, and to a frigate far her inferior in size and strength.

"Severely wounded, I again became indebted to the kindness of Stanley: with a brother's solicitude he watched my recovery, and on my confiding to him the story of my love, offered to accompany me to the father of Sophia, with whom he was intimate, and to use all his influence in my behalf. Accordingly, as soon as we got

leave, we set out for the seat of Mr. Meredith. A presentiment of evil damped the ardour of my joy, as I once more inhaled her native air. We stopped at the inn not far from the house, and sent for the favourite attendant of my betrothed wife.

"She came—her mourning dress, her shrill scream as she sunk into a chair, alarmed my tenderness. I hastily inquired after her mistress. The poor girl burst into tears, and sobbing said, 'Oh! Sir, I thought you were dead, and my dear mistress thought so too. We heard of your shipwreck, and the papers stated that all on board were lost. My dear lady fell from one fit into another: she only recovered to tell the story of her love to her miserable parents; her senses left her; a violent fever succeeded, and in less than a fortnight ——' She could not proceed, or if she had, I could not have heard her. Stanley caught me in his arms; he had me put to bed; he never left me for a week that I remained at the inn; and at length, when I was able to

return to Town, saw me safe in this house. Can you wonder, Mary, that your brother has a broken heart?"

Lady Mary and her friend sat speechless with their emotions: she could only throw her arms round his neck, and press him to her bosom. The tender features of Lady Angeline, the melting tones of her compassionate voice, the soul of feeling which every look, every action betrayed, was sweetly soothing to the miserable Captain Evelyn.

He listened with melancholy pleasure to her conversation, which was directed chiefly to himself; and felt for the first time since his return to England a gleam of tranquillity enter his bosom as he gazed on her lovely form, and witnessed the angelic benevolence of this interesting girl towards himself. The story of his misfortunes was made known to the Earl and the rest of the family: all united to dissipate his grief by every kind and soothing attention, and next to the gentle friend of his sister, he derived consolation from the

marked and endearing attention of Lady Desmond.

The next day the splendid mansion of Lord De Courci did ample credit to the refined and elegant taste of its owner. A large suit of rooms, magnificently lighted up, and ornamented in the first style of fashionable luxury, were laid open for the reception of the company; another suit of apartments for refreshments; and the ball-room was beautifully chalked with the arms of the Earl and the Viscount, and emblematical devices in honour of the little stranger.

The family of Lord Fortescue were the only company at the dinner-table, from which the ladies retired early to dress for the christening. Cecil had purposely ordered her's to be the same as her friends, and as soon as she was attired for the night, hastened to the chamber of Lady Angeline, whose appearance called forth her warmest encomiums.

"Never, Angeline, have I seen you look so lovely as to-night: you appear more like a celestial than a terrestrial being."

"Ah! you flatterer," cried her ladyship, smiling affectionately on her handsome friend. "I can with justice affirm, that you, my dear Cecil, never looked better than you do now; and I think Robert will agree with me."

They certainly each looked more than usually beautiful; but Lady Angeline's delicate and aërial form, gracefully proportioned in every limb, was seen to advantage by a close dress of white satin, richly trimmed with pearls of great value. Her bosom and arms, exposed no more than decency warranted, were decorated with the same virgin ornaments; and, like Miss Fortescue's, her fine chesnut hair, dressed in the Grecian costume, was ornamented by roses of pearls. Each wore in their bosoms a couple of white rose-buds; not even a green leaf interrupted the purity of their toute ensemble; and when they descended to the illuminated drawing-room of the Earl, Captain Evelyn, who was standing near the door, paid the first tribute to their natural loveliness. He seat-

ed himself on the couch next her ladyship, and Henry Fortescue, who, as he admiringly gazed on the lovely little figure by his side, yet could hardly conceal his chagrin at the marked attention of one he considered as a rival.

The whole family now assembled, and the Earl, as he kissed with a parent's fondness his interesting niece, called the blush of modesty on her cheek by his open praise of her beauty. Nothing but the innocency of her heart and mind could exceed the innocency of her appearance. Lord Desmond, enchanted by the equally attractive looks of Miss Fortescue, soon deepened the bloom on her lovely countenance by his fond encomiums. "It is impossible," thought the enamoured lover of Cecil, "for a more enchanting object to meet my sight than my betrothed wife."

Lady Elvira entered, and stood the unrivalled beauty of the night.

The Duchess of Aimhigh's name was now announced, who, with her handsome daughters, hastened to express their plea-

sure at the happy reunion of the families, and the birth of the infant hope of the De Courcis.

"By my troth, my lord, I know of few things which have given me greater satisfaction. Ah! you young rogues," said she, looking at Lord Desmond and Miss Fortescue, "I knew that ye were born for each other. Lady Angeline, my little friend, upon my faith you look enchanting. When shall I have the happiness of dancing at your wedding? Oh! you sly one," seeing her colour deeply; "it will not be long first, I dare say."

She then passed on, while Lady Clementina, throwing herself into the seat which Captain Evelyn had just vacated, said:

"My dear Lady Angeline, I am so rejoiced that all is made up between your uncle and the Viscount: it was such an awkward thing you know, for you to be obliged to be strangers to each other. Don't you think Henry Fortescue looks amazingly handsome, now that he has laid aside his mourning? I dare say he will not long

remain a widower. Do you think he will?"

"I cannot tell, indeed," replied Lady Angeline, confusedly.

"Oh! I am confident that it will be his own fault if he does. I hope he will dance with me to-night. Do you know if he is engaged?"

"At the desire of my uncle, he is to dance the first dances with me," replied Lady Angeline.

"Ah!" exclaimed the daughter of the Duchess, sighing deeply, "if you, Lady Angeline, should be the happy woman destined to become the wife of Henry Fortescue, how many will envy you."

Lady Angeline rose greatly embarrassed: more company arrived, and the Earl, looking round him, said:

"I believe, Lady Mary, we may now send for our little heathen."

Glad of an opportunity to recover herself, Lady Angeline hastened to the nursery, and taking her favourite, who was now attired in a robe of the richest lace over a white satin slip, she carried him

laughing and cooing into the drawing-room, followed by his attendants.

The ceremony began: the heart of Henry throbbed with violence as he saw her kiss the smiling infant, and place him in the arms of the reverend Bishop, then name him after himself and Lord Desmond. The trembling sweetness of her voice, and the interesting blush which overspread her face and bosom, would have excited the most delicious hopes, had he not cast his eyes on Captain Evelyn, who was attentively observing every movement of her ladyship. When the ceremony was concluded, she again kissed the infant, who twined his fingers in the rich chain of pearls which adorned her neck. His mother releasing her from his grasp, fondly embraced her son, who suffered himself to pass through a variety of hands with the greatest good humour; and, at length, retired with his nurse from the blaze of lights which had fixed his attention.

The enlivening sounds of a fine band of music, which now issued from the ball-room, called the younger part of the com-

pany there. The rooms began to fill, and every one loudly expressed their admiration at the splendour of the decorations, and the costliness of the furniture. The floor of the ball-room they declared was so admirably done, that it was a pity to efface it; while the family of Lord Fortescue felt the value of the compliment paid them, by the hospitable and liberal minded Earl.

Lady Desmond vainly endeavoured to repress a sigh, as she cast a glance of mingled tenderness and pain on the arms of the two families; she, however, remembered the felicity now within the reach of her son, and felt grateful that he at least was not the third victim to family vengeance.

Lord De Courci led the eldest son of the Viscount towards the beautiful wife of Mr. Wrottesley, and requested that her ladyship would open the ball with Sidney Fortescue. The colour on her cheek grew deeper as she felt the touch of his hand as he led her to the top of the room: she, however, repressed her secret exultation;

and remembered the part she had to act. George Evelyn was honoured with the hand of Lady Lucy Aimhigh, and Henry advanced towards Lady Angeline, whose sympathy for the wounded brother of Lady Mary made her devote every moment that she could spare to speak comfort and consolation to his afflicted mind. Smiling on him with ineffable sweetness, she gave her hand to Henry, who sighed deeply as he conducted her to the dance.

The dejection visible in his fine features made Lady Angeline fear that he was unwell, and she besought him with so much earnestness to tell her if he was, that Henry forgot his suspicions, and, pressing tenderly her hand, assured her that one word from her would instantly remove his disquietude.

"Indeed," said she, raising her modest eyes timidly to his; "and have I really so much power, Mr. Fortescue? Tell me what you mean, that I may instantly exert it."

She felt his hand tremble in her's. They were now at the bottom of the dance:

Henry still hesitated to name his wish. Lady Desmond came up to them, and nodded affectionately as she said:

"Take care of Angeline, Mr. Fortescue, for my sake."

"Oh!" thought Henry, "that I had the means to prove how joyfully I would obey you."

"You have not explained to me what you meant," said Lady Angeline, again casting her eyes timidly on his face, and drawing inadvertently one of the rose-buds from her own white bosom.

"Forgive my seeming presumption then," replied the youngest son of the Viscount, "if I dare make one more inquiry concerning that ring so dear to you. I almost fear to offend you, and yet you are so good, so gentle, that I think you will pardon me if I ask, was it the gift of a favoured lover? Pardon, I conjure you, my temerity, but your answer will eternally oblige me."

It was now Lady Angeline's turn to tremble. She had now an excellent opportunity of exerting all the art of female co-

queting: but above such mean deception, and still diffident as to the cause of his earnestness to be informed concerning the ring, she candidly owned that it was the present of his father, on the evening before her quitting the Castle.

The glow of animating pleasure, of returning hope, illumined the countenance, and sparkled in the fine eyes of Henry Fortescue. Passionately catching the rosebud from her hand, he pressed it to his lips, and placed it in his own bosom.

The delicate pink of her cheek was increased by this action of his:

"Dearest Lady Angeline," said he, with unusual energy, "and did my father express a wish that it should remain on its enviable situation until you bestowed this inestimable hand on some highly favoured lover? Oh! that his son might dare aspire to hope a gift of his would be thus treasured."

"Ah!" thought her ladyship, "how little does that son imagine with what fondness I have cherished what once belonged to him."

They were now prevented from continuing their conversation by the commencement of the second dance; at the conclusion of which they were joined by Lord Desmond and his affianced bride. The refreshment-rooms were all crowded, and they, therefore, retired to a small private apartment contiguous to those which were opened for company, where their partners soon brought them what they had desired, and Lord Desmond and Cecil were not long before they had forgot that Henry and Lady Angeline were present.

"Have you forgiven my impertinent curiosity?" inquired Henry, thrown off his guard by the extreme loveliness of her appearance, and the happiness of his own feelings. "I fear you will deem me very presumptuous, but you know not the vexation this ring has occasioned me. I once thought, from your attention to Captain Francis Evelyn, that he was perhaps more dear to you than a friend: that, in short, he possessed a heart worthy a monarch."

Lady Angeline half looked towards him, then, blushing, said:

"You have learnt to flatter, Mr. Fortescue, like the rest of mankind. My heart is full of failings: you would fain persuade me that I am better than most young women of my age, but are not aware how silly, how foolish, I can be sometimes. Let me, at least, from your lips, from you, who I have always considered as my best friend, hear only the simple language of truth."

"And is it possible," cried he exultingly, "that Lady Angeline regards me in that light? How shall I express my gratitude!"

He cast a look towards the couch where his sister and her lover had been sitting; it was just vacant: Cecil had remarked the expression of her brother's countenance, and they had by consent stole quietly out of the apartment, that their presence might not be a restraint on him. Lady Angeline rose to return to the ball-room as soon as she perceived they were alone, but Henry gently detained her.

"One moment only," said he in a voice

of thrilling softness, "dear Lady Angeline. And am I, indeed, regarded as a friend by you: you whose image has eternally possessed my mind since the hour I beheld you in the boat on the lake? You who first taught my heart that it was capable of loving with all its energies; all the sweet emotions of pure affection. Ah! I have offended you, I see: you quit me in anger. I feel I have done wrong in thus hastily betraying my sentiments. Oh! do not leave me in displeasure; do not punish me so severely for an involuntary fault."

He took her hands in his. Sick and trembling with the sudden joy of hearing herself beloved by him she had so long and so highly valued, she sunk half fainting on the seat; and though Henry was on one knee before her, yet she had not the power to bid him rise; while, as he gazed on her averted face, as he felt the trembling of her soft white hand in his, a secret hope beamed on his soul that her agitation proceeded not from displeasure.

"Say but that you pardon me," said he,

tenderly pressing her hand to his lips, "and I will instantly conduct you to the ball-room."

"I feel the impropriety of remaining here too forcibly to say any thing but that I beg you will allow me to join the company. What would any one think if they were to see me alone in this retired apartment?"

"Angelic creature!" he replied, "it was your delicacy, your purity of mind and manners, that first attracted my attention. It was that, Lady Angeline, and the grateful eloquence of your heavenly eyes, on that ever to be remembered night, when in the warmth of your feelings you clasped my hand near the root-house of the lake, that enslaved my heart, and made it your's for life."

"Ah!" cried Lady Angeline, springing from his hold, "in thus listening to your avowal, I am as imprudent as my sister."

In a moment she was in the ball-room, where Henry slowly followed her, and vainly endeavoured to secure her attention.

Cecil caught her eye, and taking her arm, led her out of the crowded apartment to the privacy of her own. Here her ladyship threw her arms round the neck of her friend, and gave relief to her feelings by a gush of tears.

"My friend, my dearest friend," said the daughter of the Viscount, "I see that my brother has been surprised into an avowal of his affection: I have long known it; but I promised never to betray him. What, dear Angeline, is the cause of this emotion? Oh! you know not the excellence of Henry's nature, the nobleness of his heart, the goodness of his principles. These tears alarm me for his happiness."

"They proceed from an excess of rapture," faintly replied her friend: "forgive my weakness; but thus suddenly to find myself the object of his regard, of him whose myrtle I so tenderly have cherished, whose virtues have been dear to me ever since our first meeting—oh! Cecil, I cannot restrain the violence of my joy;

I can scarcely breathe from too much happiness."

Miss Fortescue hastily applied some restoratives to her fainting friend, who, tenderly pressing her hand, thanked her in the sweetest manner for her goodness.

"Let us return, dear Cecil; we shall be missed," said Lady Angeline.

"I hope I do not look ill, do I? For I shall be so teased by Lady Clementina."

"Poor girl," replied Miss Fortescue, "she is greatly to be pitied: I know she loves Henry, and has done for a long time. She is amiable and good-natured, but must not consult any thing but ambition in the disposal of her hand."

They now returned to the ball-room: a look from Cecil silenced the inquiries of Lord Desmond, while Captain Evelyn, who noticed the paleness of her cheek, asked with brotherly concern if she was unwell, offering her, at the same time, a bottle of salts. Henry, who had seen her leave the room with his sister, eagerly sought the opportunity of a moment to ask if he had

any thing to hope: Cecil, looking archly in his face, said:—

"I believe, Harry, you have taken care to exonerate me from my promise, and my friend will not be long before she signs my release also. Adieu, brother: you need not wear the willow."

Then quitting him, she gave her hand to her lover, who, as he could not dance with her the present dances, chose to enjoy the luxury of her conversation. She gave a look of encouragement to Lady Angeline, who now stood up with George Evelyn, determined, if possible, to rally her spirits, lest her agitation should be noticed.

Henry, anxious to be near her, to press her little trembling hand once more in his, took Lady Clementina for his partner; but his eyes soon betrayed, to the long attached daughter of the Duchess, the magnet which attracted them.

Sighing deeply, she saw him quit herself as soon as politeness would permit, to speak to Lady Angeline. The good-natured and amiable Lady Clementina Aimhigh

remembered her own engagements, and secretly owned that the daughter of the Earl was worthy the preference of the son of the Viscount.

Lady Angeline trembled as she saw him approach where she was sitting with his sister: she declined his proposal of going down the next dance, alleging that she must accompany Lady Desmond through the rooms occupied by those who were otherwise employed.

Henry loooked mortified.

"I fear," said he, in a low voice, "that displeasure is the reason of your refusal: if I am wrong in my conjectures, will you honour me with your hand, should you be disposed to dance again to-night?"

"Angeline has already over-exerted herself," said his sister; "but I think I may promise for her: may I not, my dear friend?"

She rose, and Henry immediately took her seat, and with it the trembling hand of Lady Angeline, whose timid delicacy tempted her to withdraw it.

"I own myself unworthy to retain this treasure," said Henry, sighing. "The affection of my sister would fain prompt her to answer for your ladyship: but I will not again entreat to become your partner if it is disagreeable to you."

"You wrong yourself, Mr. Fortescue, by such a supposition; at present I am fatigued, yet I must exert myself nevertheless, to relieve my aunt and Lady Mary. If you continue to wish it, I will dance with you after supper."

She then joined the wife of Lord Reginald, who was just then passing; and Henry had not another opportunity of speaking to her until supper, when to his great joy he was placed next to her.

With unsteady fingers Lady Angeline broke the motto presented her by Henry, and coloured deeply as she read the following couplet:——

"Start not, sweet girl; for he who gives you this
Is destin'd to bestow the chaste connubial kiss."

Henry prevented her from destroying the motto, which a natural impulse impelled him to take from her.

"The lines are execrable," said he; "as they generally are in these things; but let me see, dear Lady Angeline, what you have bestowed on me."

Then reading his own, he said, gently pressing her hand:—

"I accept the omen."

Her ladyship took the little scrip of paper, and to her great confusion read these lines:—

"*In her sweet eyes of dark cerulean blue,*
Read her long cherished tenderness for you;
While her fair cheeks, deep vivid hue,
Proclaim the Sibyl's words are true."

"Do not deprive me of so dear a confession," cried Henry, gaily retaking it from her ladyship: "I will put faith in this herald of my good fortune. Say, dearest friend," leading her at the same time into the ball-room, "may I venture to hope, that at a

future period you will allow me to aspire to the dear possession of this sweet hand? I know I am trespassing on your good-nature, your kindness; but if you knew with what idolatrous fondness I have cherished the myrtle which was sanctified by your touch, you would do justice to the strength of my passion, which has literally increased every time I have seen you."

Struck by this instance of refined tenderness, which so well accorded with her own feelings, Lady Angeline raised her eyes to the glowing face of her lover.

The sweet expressive gratitude of her bright blue orbs, the melting softness of her features, thrilled through the soul of Henry.

"She loves me," thought he; "the heart of this little angel is my own."

The room turned round with him: he staggered against a couch placed in the recess of a window, and as he sunk on it, would have fainted, but for the cry of Lady Angeline, which immediately recovered him.

"I am quite well," said he, rising. "Do not be alarmed, lovely Angeline, it was the delirium of the moment which overcame me. It was the enchanting, the touching expression of your countenance that gave birth to an idea fraught with ecstasy. Oh! then confirm it, adored Angeline: only whisper that I am not indifferent to you, that I may one day aspire to the supreme bliss of calling you mine."

"I entreat of you to recollect where you are," said she, in accents of trembling sweetness: "I should die with confusion if any one observed your conduct. Collect yourself, my dear friend: another time I may listen to you without suffering my present dread of being noticed. If I am dear to you, spare me from the raillery of some who are now present."

Henry instantly recovered his presence of mind, and pressing her hand, led her to the dance, which was now commencing. Visions of bliss floated across his mind: he heard only her voice: he saw only her elegant little figure: her ever expressive

face: and his heart palpitated with hopes and wishes hitherto unknown to him; while that of the amiable object of his best affections beat with equal tenderness, though not with equal ardour.

The morning was far advanced before the company began to separate; and the harassed family of the Earl gladly retired to their own apartments.

The sweet conviction of being beloved by Henry Fortescue for awhile deprived Lady Angeline of sleep: she called to mind his words, his looks, till weary with an excess of happiness, she sunk into a slumber as calm and tranquil as that of her little godson.

The dreams of Henry were full of the delightful ideas which had filled his mind when waking. To be the object of affection to such a character as Lady Angeline De Courci created in the pious soul of Henry unspeakable gratitude to the Almighty Disposer of events; and he felt authorised, if such was really the case, to consider himself the peculiar favourite of

Heaven. Anxious to be fully convinced of a fact so important to all his future happiness, he called next day on the Earl, when hearing the sound of Lady Angeline's voice in the music-room, he softly opened the door and entered; but not without her ladyship perceiving him. The carnation of her cheek betrayed her confusion, yet she suffered him to detain her hand, and to draw a chair close to her's.

A plain cambric robe, made up to the throat, was the simple morning dress of Lady Angeline: her beautiful hair waved naturally over her interesting and expressive countenance. Unornamented, unadorned, she now appeared to Henry as the sweetest creature he had ever beheld; while, as he gazed with indescribable delight on her innate loveliness of form, he became more than ever convinced that the secret spell which had so instantaneously attached him to her for life, was the delicacy and native innocency of her mind and manners.

He began the conversation by apologiz-

ing for his hasty disclosure of the state of his affections the preceding evening, owning that he had been thrown off his guard by circumstances and the tortures of suspense.

"Suffer me to hope," said he, "that I shall not sink in your estimation for what may appear a want of delicacy on my part. Suffer me also to say, that the moment I beheld you, my heart involuntarily told me that it was capable of feeling for you emotions of a tenderer nature than those I had uniformly entertained for my cousin. The engagement I was then under was made by my father and uncle; nor had I found occasion to lament their choice until chance presented you to my view. Duty and honour overcame, for a time, the secret prepossession of my heart, but even these were insufficient to wholly banish from my recollection the angel form of her who alone had taught me the sweet feelings of a lover.

"Attached from childhood as a brother to my cousin, I loved her with a sincerity,

a steadiness of affection, which left her no room to doubt that my nature was capable of a more ardent passion: released from my vows by her untimely death, I mourn her loss as a beloved sister, and as such her memory will ever be dear to me."

He paused for a moment, and then continued:—

"Had it pleased heaven to have united me to the woman of my choice, no second love could ever possess my heart. Warm and romantic in my attachment, her image would have been too sacred to have mingled it with that of another, and the constancy of my affection would have been proved by the sanctity, the veneration in which I should have held the least trifle that she once had touched. Yet, Lady Angeline, dearly as I have esteemed you, had my father continued true to his first intention, I should never have ran the risk of offending you by the disclosure of my adoration: I should have continued to idolize you in secret, until the strength of my love had consumed me. From a fate

like this I am free, unless you, beloved Angeline, redoom me to despair. Speak but one word, enchanting girl; one little word, to assure me that I may encourage the delightful hope of being permitted, at a future time, to openly avow my tenderness. You are silent, Angeline. Oh! best beloved, fervently as I adore you, yet my nature is such that I should be wretched unless your bosom reciprocally beat in unison with mine. Say, Angeline, dear timid girl, do you think that in uniting your fate with mine, my taste, manners, disposition, and habits of life, are such as would render you as happy as your's I am convinced would ensure my felicity?"

Lady Angeline trembled so excessively that he felt alarmed lest she should fall from the music-stool. In order, therefore, to support her, he put one arm round her waist, and with the other pressed her hand tenderly to his lips.

"Beloved Angeline, may I venture to translate these lovely blushes, this be-

witching, this eloquent confusion, to my wishes? May I dare hope, that the quick palpitations of your heart arise from feelings similar to mine?"

Lady Angeline half pressed the hand of Henry in her own, then covered her glowing face with the other, while the son of the Viscount, no longer able to govern his rapture, caught her to his bosom.

"My adored, my sweetest Angeline," said he, in a voice trembling with excessive happiness, "do I then fold in my arms all that my soul holds most dear, all that is valuable in this life? Oh! confirm the ecstasy of this moment, by blessing me with the sound of your voice; tell me, dearest Angeline, that I alone am dear to you."

"If the confession of my regard is necessary to your happiness," said her ladyship in a faint voice, as she wiped away the tears of rapture which filled her eyes, "believe me, dear Henry, that from the first time I saw you in the root-house of the lake, and heard the sweet sound of

your voice in accents of friendly advice to my then imprudent sister, my heart devoted itself to you. It no longer felt itself light and cheerful as usual; and the pain I suffered at hearing that you were engaged convinced me that you alone would ever be its master. With religious tenderness I have preserved the volume of Petrarch, once your's; and if you doubt my constancy, let the little myrtle which you saw at the Castle, cherished with such peculiar fondness by me, speak how dear its owner is to my heart."

Henry pressed her rapturously in his arms:

"Hear me, oh! thou Supreme Being," said he, fervently raising his eyes to Heaven, full of love and pious gratitude, "oh! hear m solemnly swear to make it the study of my life to reward this angelic creature's inestimable tenderness. And thou, oh, best beloved, receive my vow of eternal fidelity and love."

For the first time he pressed his lips to those of Lady Angeline, who, half fainting

with the blissful assurance of being dear to Henry Fortescue, remained for a moment unconscious that his arms supported her, that his face was close to her's.

Blushing deeply, she gently disengaged herself from her delightful captivity, and carrying his hand to her lips, said, with magical sweetness, "Leave me now, dear Henry, to recover from the effects of too much pleasure; I feel giddy with excessive joy. Go, Henry, I cannot regain my composure while you are with me."

Again Henry pressed the sweet lips of his beloved Angeline to his: never before had the kiss of attention produced the same effect on his frame.

"How can I quit so much perfection?" said he, gazing fondly on her graceful figure and heavenly countenance. "Oh! Angeline, with such a companion as you, how delightful will be the calm scenery of the Abbey. My dear father! how will he doat on such a daughter; how joyfully will he see his ring give place to one which will make you mine for ever."

"Oh! leave me now I entreat you," said her ladyship, half sobbing: "my spirits are incapable of supporting the sudden rush of such unlooked for happiness. I am thine, beloved Henry, thine for ever; but in pity to my weakness, join the family in the drawing-room."

Embracing her affectionately, Henry unwillingly obeyed, and Lady Angeline felt relieved by his absence. Tears of rapture gave ease to her oppressed bosom. Her first thought was to kneel and render thanks to her Creator, who had made her what she was, and she piously vowed never for a day to lose the recollection of that gratitude and veneration due to the Almighty, who had bestowed on her the highest of all human happiness—the heart of him she had so long and so tenderly loved.

The attachment of the youngest son of the Viscount was soon made known to the Earl and his own family. Time only was required to make it public: until then Henry even deferred disclosing it to his father; but it was highly gratifying to his

feelings to learn that his pretensions were pleasing to all her relations. Her uncle, in particular, could not avoid saying, that he knew of no man so deserving of his little girl as the son of the Viscount.

Lord Desmond looked archly in the face of Lady Angeline, then kissing her cheek, said, "I comprehend, my dearest cousin, the secret history of the myrtle, and forgive you now for declining to be Marchioness of Arlington."

"Oh! Angeline," whispered Mr. Wrottesley, "will you now give over to my care little Henry Bloomfield?"

"No, indeed," said she, smiling sweetly on her brother-in-law: "the boy has become more dear to me, and I hope, with a good education, and a good heart, that he will never disgrace either the beloved name of Henry, or the profession I intend him for."

"You are a sly girl, Angeline," cried Lady Elvira, "for I really never suspected your attachment for Henry Fortescue. But it seems you are like many other people,

can preach to others more than you perform yourself."

In truth, this event, which gave universal satisfaction to the two families, was a new source of vexation and chagrin to Lady Elvira. She looked upon the silence of Lady Angeline as a proof of her dissimulation; and heartless herself, she regarded her with a suspicious eye, anxious to discover failings in one, who, with the tenderest solicitude, had ever studied to conceal her own.

Lady Desmond had returned to the Castle soon after the christening, and the children of the Viscount had passed a few days at the Abbey. The nuptials of Lady Emma's darling son were to be celebrated in March, and the friend of Cecil, and the favourite of the Viscount, had promised to accompany her down to the beloved seat of her ancestors. This arrangement gave secret satisfaction to Lady Elvira. Hitherto she had not been able to draw Sidney to her house unaccompanied by his wife, or some of her own family, and the presence

of Lady Angeline, whose purity of dress and manners was a forcible contrast to her own half-naked form, could not be otherwise than an occasional restraint upon the freedom of her actions.

Dressed in the luxurious fashion of the times, Lady Elvira was present at the ceremony of her cousin's marriage with the only daughter of the Viscount. She saw with sickening envy the tender homage paid by Henry to her sister: she saw that sister, who ought to have been sacredly dear to her, pin the bridal favour on his bosom, and heard his whisper as he fondly kissed her fair hand—"A few hours only will divide us, my beloved Angeline—to-morrow I shall be with you at the Abbey."

Lady Desmond, who had arrived in Town in order to be present at the marriage of her son, pressed with maternal tenderness the blooming Cecil to her bosom, while the daughters of the Duchess, and their young friends, crowded round to congratulate her upon her happiness.

"God bless you both," cried the Du-

chess, shaking them kindly by the hand. "I mean to dance a reel to-night with your uncle in honour of your nuptials. Give my love to the Viscount, and tell him that I esteem him more than ever, and did not my engagements prevent it, I should certainly assure him in person of my regard."

As soon as the bride and her friend had changed their dresses, and Lady Angeline had kissed her little godson, they stole down the back stairs, wishing to gain their carriages unobserved. Henry, however, was on the watch, and after tenderly embracing his sister, and consigning her to the care of the enraptured Desmond, he conducted his own affianced wife to the chariot of Lady Desmond, who returned that morning to the peaceful seclusion of the Castle.

Lord De Courci, proud of the happy union, which had now more than ever reunited the once hostile families, gave a splendid dinner to the bridal party, and in the evening a ball and supper. As on

his first public night, the floor of the ball room was tastefully chalked, the devices however differed. In the centre was seen Love and Hymen, uniting the arms of the young lord with the house of Fortescue; cupids with garlands of flowers were displayed on the corners of the floor, and other emblems of the happy event which had just taken place. No expence was spared to render the whole decorations of the rooms striking and brilliant.

Henry, although in the midst of a crowded assembly, yet felt himself alone without Lady Angeline. The chief pleasure he received was in listening to the just encomiums paid by Captain Evelyn to the virtues of his absent love; and as he pressed his hand in token of friendship, Henry gave him a general invitation to the Abbey.

"I thank you," replied the unhappy brother of Lady Mary, "but the duties of my profession will shortly call me from England, and those friends to whose kindness I am indebted for every affectionate attention. Amongst the list of those ami-

able beings who have sympathized in my sorrows, your name is not the last. Oh! Mr. Fortescue, may you soon enjoy the sweetest of all earthly happiness, domestic felicity. No woman was ever more calculated to bestow it than the angelic creature who left us this morning. For ever doomed in secret to be the victim of blighted love, I yet can feel rejoiced at the bliss which is your lot, in possessing the tender heart of Lady Angeline De Courci."

Henry's eyes filled with benevolent commiseration, as he felt convinced that this amiable and truly deserving man was destined to pass through life an alien to those joys he was so formed to render permanent, while his brother, with scarcely any other recommendation than a handsome person, had already since his residence at the Earl's contrived to attach to himself the daughter of a nobleman and an heiress. He had told Henry, that as soon as he could procure the necessary leave of absence, they meant to take a trip to Scotland; and he had some suspicion that

young Evelyn meant to carry his plan into execution that night.

His suspicions were verified, for George, taking advantage of the freedom of the ball, under pretence of seeking refreshment, carried off his prize to the great mortification of many a fair lady, who envied the young heiress her handsome lover. The Earl and his son were soon apprised of this frolic, for such it might be termed, as the father of the lady had raised no objection to the match; but the young people were bent on a trip to Scotland, and they determined to consult their own inclinations more than those of their relations. It was nevertheless considered as a juvenile affair, and the harmony of the evening was not interrupted by the disappearance of George Evelyn and his much envied partner.

Their elopement however affected both Lady Elvira and Sidney, with whom she was dancing when it took place.

"I hope," said her ladyship, with an air of extreme softness, "that nothing will occur to impede their happiness. I

am convinced that there would be few unhappy marriages, if young people were permitted to follow their own secret wishes. What do you think, Mr. Fortescue?" inquired her ladyship, casting her beautiful eyes towards him with tenderness and unsubdued affection, then blushing deeply, she sighed and turned them on the ground.

Sidney was hesitating what to reply. "I feel faint," said she, giving him her hand: "have the goodness to lead me to a seat. The heat perhaps has overcome me."

Sidney felt her hand tremble in his, as he led her to the coolest place in the room; then flew to procure her some refreshment. He returned, and eagerly inquired how she felt herself.

"I am better," said she, wiping away a tear. "Oh! Mr. Fortescue, the circumstance of to-night brings most forcibly to my mind my own imprudence; yet shall I ever lament the interference of your brother, which prevented our union, and which has occasioned me to act in many respects

so different to what I should then have done, that I feel unworthy of even this little act of kindness from your hands." Sidney was silent. "As your wife," she continued in a voice of melting tenderness, "I should have been the happiest of women. Whatever errors I may possess, your love would have eradicated, and my study would have been to render myself worthy the sacrifice you had made. But now, now that my fatal rashness has divided us for ever, I am continually acting different from my real character: I am eternally at war with myself. I wish to be what I ought to be, but I find that I cannot." She paused, and Sidney, scarcely less agitated than herself, felt compelled to assure her, that nothing but herself could have weakened the ardour of his attachment.

"You do, you must despise me," said she, again fixing her magical eyes on his face, "or why do you so sedulously avoid visiting at my house, unless accompanied by a friend? If, indeed, I am not an object of contempt in your eyes, if indeed you for-

give the past, call on me to-morrow as a pledge that I may at least hope by my future conduct to gain your friendship."

"You may rely upon my obeying you," replied Sidney, as his eyes wandered over her exquisite form and perfect features; then hastily pressing her hand to his lips, he said, "Lady Elvira need not fear that I shall ever think of her with indifference. Such beauty, such personal loveliness, cannot fail to charm the heart of every man."

"And yet," she replied, rising, "I should be contented to possess only one." She then joined the company, and carefully refrained from giving way again to her feelings, lest she should alarm the slumbering virtue of the son of the Viscount.

Not as usual did Sidney return the chaste tenderness of his wife; he felt that he had acted imprudently in yielding to the wishes of the beautiful inconstant: yet he knew not how, consistently with good manners,

to refuse her. Fatigued, and displeased with himself, he retired to his chamber, and would have rejoiced at any event that could have enabled him with decency to break his engagement. He saw his brother depart next morning for the Abbey, and secretly wished that he was going with him, but business unfortunately compelled him to remain in London. With a head and heart at war with each other, Sidney proceeded to the elegant house of Lady Elvira, where every article evinced the luxurious taste and fortune of the owner.

Mr. Wrottesley had that morning quitted Town for a week, his wife of course was alone, waiting the arrival of Sidney with anxiety, lest he should think it prudent to forget his promise. Her eyes sparkled with a joy she could not conceal as she saw him enter the drawing-room. She rose, and with an air of irresistible grace offered him her hand. Her ladyship was in a morning dress of clear cambric trimmed with fine lace: the exquisite

beauty of her form was visible through the transparency of her robe, and the symmetry of her bosom was ill concealed by the cambric which covered it, yet being covered, it gave an air of modesty to her appearance, that rendered her more dangerous to behold.

" This is indeed a kindness," said she, " which I hardly ventured to expect. I feared that you would forget a promise made to such an ingrate as myself."

" My visit, you remember," replied the son of the Viscount, " was to be the pledge of my friendship, how then could I break my promise, which at all times I have endeavoured to hold sacred ?"

" Ah !" said she, " I feel the justice of your reproach, I acknowledge the propriety of your correction, yet am I sufficiently punished for my fault, and yet I believe that I alone am the sufferer." She placed her white hand on the top of the couch on which she sat: Sidney's chair was close to it: he involuntarily took it and carried it to his lips.

" Let this convince your ladyship of my friendly sentiments towards you : the past cannot be recalled, nor will it afford you any consolation to learn that at one time I was the chief object of pity."

" Oh ! but it would," she replied, turning on him her eyes full of languishing tenderness : " it would soften the keen sense of my misery to be assured that you did not hate me, that you even felt for my irremediable distress. Sidney, it cannot injure the peace of your too happy Julia to bestow now and then a sigh, a tear to my unhappy fate."

Sidney, at the mention of his wife, started, and let fall her hand ; yet the tears which fell from her bewitching eyes seemed to reproach him for his want of feeling. Again he took her soft hand ; he pressed it to his lips, and the next moment found himself seated by her side.

" All that I dare feel, and more perhaps than I ought, consistent with your honour and my own, believe me I do. Once more let me repeat that the past cannot be recalled : let us then submit, dear Lady

Elvira, to our present circumstances. I forgive you all I once suffered on your account, and am willing by every action to convince you that I am your friend."

"Let me then enjoy as much of your society as you can spare. Oh! Sidney, if any thing would render me worthy and amiable, it will be the desire of proving myself grateful for such kindness. I will listen to you as to a brother, I will scrupulously attend to every thing you advise me to do. Will you think of me as a sister? Will you love me as such? Will you, Sidney, be the saviour of my soul?"

Sidney, softened by such a question, gazed irresolutely on the trembling, supplicating, beautiful form of his first love. "Oh! Elvira," said he, "doubt not my readiness to obey such a flattering wish; yet say, can you divest yourself of all remembrance of past scenes, or can I forget how madly once I doated on this matchless form of thine? Will it not be dangerous, Elvira, for two beings who once loved to enter into such tender intercourse?"

"No," said her ladyship, with studied

innocency of manner. "I have nothing to dread from such a counsellor as you. Once, indeed, my own weakness betrayed me into your power, and you were too noble, too generous, to take advantage of my delirium: do not, therefore, deny me all the consolation now left you to bestow."

"I yield," cried Sidney, "to your wishes, but first let me claim the privilege of my new character." He drew her towards him, and as his lips were fixed on her's, as he felt the luxurious voluptuousness of her form within his arms, his heart told him that the emotions which agitated it were not those of brotherly affection.

With well dissembled prudence, Lady Elvira withdrew herself from his embrace, and began conversing about his father and family concerns. Sidney recovered his presence of mind, but still found himself unable to talk with the ease he ought to have done. The striking difference in her present behaviour to that at the Villa made him incline to view her in a more favourable light, and as excess of love for himself

had even then led her into error, believing her to be now sensible of her fault, he felt inclined to make allowance for what had before shocked his principles. So lovely, so fascinating a young woman was seldom to be seen, and Sidney's heart at length pitied her unhappy situation, while at the same time that it esteemed her excellent husband, and regretted that one so truly deserving the affection of a wife should never have possessed it.

Deceived by Lady Elvira's well managed conduct, Sidney become the dupe of her artifices: he readily excused all that had happened; he willingly believed what, in fact he had ever done, that had she become his wife, she would have proved all that he had wished; and he set down every irregularity of her behaviour to her rash and precipitate marriage. Insensibly to himself, he was more than ever her attendant, and her society seemed to have become necessary to his happiness. A month of dangerous delusion passed rapidly away: Sidney thought her sometimes imprudent, but he thought her virtuous, and as such re-

spected her with a brother's delicacy. Fortunately for his peace, and that of the amiable Julia, chance discovered to him that the Elvira of the Villa, and the Elvira of Manchester Square, were still the same.

Through the interest of Lord Dorrington, Mr. Wrottesley was appointed to fill an important situation in the administration of Indian affairs, and it was thought necessary for him to leave England with all possible dispatch. The agony of Lady Elvira, who of course was obliged to accompany him, was extreme, and Sidney felt indescribably agitated when he heard the intelligence, while Mrs. Fortescue, who had silently noticed his frequent visits to the lovely syren, rejoiced that her beloved husband would be freed from the magic power of her charms.

Lady Angeline was enjoying the calm sweets of retirement, surrounded by friends who adored her, and by Henry, who lived but in her presence, when she received the sudden intelligence of Mr. Wrottesley's appointment. The grief of Lady Dorothea

was excessive. "Alas!" she cried, "I am not able to travel, my child, with you and Lady Desmond, to take my last farewell of my beautiful Elvira. Oh! I feel too well assured that I shall never see her again."

Lady Desmond vainly endeavoured to afford consolation to her worthy relation, while her niece hastily ran over the new bridge which had been thrown across the lake, with the letter of her sister in her hand. She was seen by Henry, who flew to meet her, and to whom she presented the cause of her distress.

"My sweetest love," said he, kissing her moist cheek, "do not be thus agitated: the absence of Lady Elvira may be shorter than you imagine. Come into the library and compose yourself." He opened the door and supported her to a seat.

"I will accompany you to Town, dear Angeline, if Lady Desmond and you will permit me."

"But what, my beloved Henry, will the Viscount think?" Just then the Viscount entered. His son was standing close

to Lady Angeline's side, holding her hand, while the tenderness of his features did not escape the quick glance of his father. Her ladyship rose hastily, and gave him the letter of her sister, saying, with extreme innocency of manner, "Ah! my dear Sir, you know not how distressed, how unhappy I am, how much I require your consolatory presence."

"My lovely little friend," replied the Viscount, throwing his arms round her slender and graceful form. "Can the father's tenderness speak more eloquently than the son's? Come, my Henry, and tell this blushing favourite of mine, that had I your powers of tranquillizing the mind, I would not see them delegated to another. I will see you again in a few minutes," said the Viscount, kissing tenderly her cheek, and consigning her to the care of his son, found what he had been in quest of, and then quitted the study.

"What can Lord Fortescue mean?" inquired Lady Angeline diffidently.

"Nothing inimical to our happiness, my beloved. I perceive my father has dis-

covered the state of our hearts, and that he rejoices at the idea of soon claiming you for his daughter. You blush, my own Angeline. Oh! how great will be my felicity, when thus folding my arms around you: I shall hear and receive the sanctioned avowal of a wife's tenderness." He pressed his lips to her's, then taking her hand, conducted her to the sitting-room of the family.

The letter of Lady Elvira was now read by Lord Desmond, who said on finishing it, "My dear Cecil, we must return to Town with my mother and Angeline. In a fortnight's time, Wrottesley will leave England, and I am particularly desirous that my cousin, as well as Everard, should receive every kindness on our part."

"I am ready, my Robert, directly, if you wish it. When, Angeline, will my dear mother set out?" "Early to-morrow morning," replied her ladyship. "You, brother, of course remain behind."

"No, he shall not," said his father, who now entered: "it is my desire that he should pay every attention to the family of

a nobleman, whose liberality of mind has induced him to treat my children with parental kindness. My little friend," said he, drawing Lady Angeline on one side, and taking her left hand in his, "has I perceive faithfully preserved my gift. Remember that it is only to give place to a nuptial present. May I name the giver of that sacred ring?"

"Not now, my lord," she replied with considerable confusion. "I will not distress you, my child," said the Viscount: "in time I see that I shall have a sacred right to call you by that endearing name. Henry, you will assist Robert in protecting my dear Angeline, and bear to the Earl my deep sense of the kindness my family has received from his hands. Soon I hope to see you return, and then, Lady Angeline, I may claim my ring."

Her ladyship saw him leave the room with filial affection, and all the tender feelings of a daughter: she would fain have thrown herself at his feet, and endeavoured to express her sense of his goodness and generous partiality, but she trusted that a

time would come, when, by a constant residence under the same roof with him, she should contribute to his happiness, and prove the strength of her gratitude.

The Viscount, out of delicacy to the feelings of Henry, forbore to express his own pleasure at the attachment he had discovered, and which he had suspected ever since their return from Town. He felt convinced that Lady Angeline, the counterpart of his still idolized Emma, was the being expressly calculated to render happy his youngest son; yet out of tenderness to the memory of his niece, who had only been dead twelve months, he was silent upon a subject which filled his own heart with a delight, a pleasure long unknown to him.

This was another instance of the vain precautions of human nature, and of the wise dispensations of Providence. His own judgment acknowledged that the presence of such a being as Lady Angeline De Courci, the daughter of his enemy, would render the Abbey a paradise. With fondness he anticipated her return to what

he hoped would become her principal residence. Although he felt a strong curiosity to behold the perfect sister of his favourite, yet could he not be tempted from his determination of continuing at the peaceful retirement of Fortescue Abbey; and he saw them depart for the gay metropolis with all a parent's hopes, wishes, and prayers, for their safety and quick return.

CHAPTER IV.

THE deep distress which Lady Angeline manifested at the idea of her sister leaving England produced for awhile a return of that affection in the bosom of Lady Elvira which she had felt in her childhood. But it soon gave place to a passion which now raged with more violence than ever: the kindness of Sidney added to its force; and it required all the consummate art of which she was now become perfect mistress to conceal it from her husband and her relations. Already had she given her farewell parties with a heroism which surprised herself; already had she read in the manly and handsome features, the tender air of the Viscount's son, that her departure affected his spirits, and rendered him unhappy.

The Earl had issued cards for a masked

ball, which was to take place three days before that fixed for her quitting England; and, with his accustomed taste and liberality, it was intended to be the most splendid thing of the kind which had been seen for some years. A thought immediately darted across her mind, which she resolved to put into execution: should she succeed, all her hopes would be realized; should she fail, her departure would at least save her from the humiliating neglect and contempt of him she so criminally adored.

Exquisitely beautiful by nature, Lady Elvira yet studied how she might improve, or at least shew to the utmost advantage, a form that would have set at defiance the most rigid critic. She prepared for herself two different dresses, and, as she was to dine at her uncle's, expressly forbade her maid, on pain of her displeasure, to disclose her intention of changing her attire.

Sidney was surprised to find that his wife declined being present at this last entertainment, given in honour of her ladyship: she, however, pleaded indisposition so strongly, that he offered to remain at

home; but this she would by no means consent to, and Sidney, with the rest of his family, attended the dinner of Lord De Courci. The pale cheek of his wife, and the undiminished tenderness of her conduct towards himself, at a time when he was conscious she was aware of his frequent visits to Lady Elvira, had cast a damp upon his spirits, which the brilliant entertainment of the night was not calculated to remove. He sat next to Lady Elvira at table; he heard the deep sighs which she appeared solicitous to suppress, and he could not avoid echoing them back, while the countenances of the whole circle betrayed their affliction at losing her.

The Earl, as if desirous to banish all unpleasant recollections, passed the wine even more freely than usual, and it was late before the gentlemen retired to their separate chambers to dress for the ball.

As Psyche, the beloved of Cupid, Lady Elvira made her appearance. Well, indeed, might such a form have justified the disobedience of the immortal son of Venus. No envious mask concealed the glowing

beauties of her face, and even Henry owned her worthy to personate the faultless character she had assumed. Sidney, heated with wine, and depressed at the idea of parting so soon with a woman whose every fault he imagined proceeded from excess of love for himself, followed her wherever she went. Many aspired to the glory of becoming her partner, but that honour was reserved for him alone; and her ladyship, who saw with secret exultation the power she still had over him, flattered herself that she might yet succeed in what she had planned. Her sighs, the bewitching languishment of her looks, the irresistible softness of her voice, and, above all, the certainty that soon they would be lost to him for ever, overcame the half-yielding fortitude of Sidney. He saw the frequent tear dim for a moment the sparkling lustre of her brilliant eyes; and, as he threw himself beside her in the refreshment-room, found it impossible to refrain any longer from expressing his unhappiness at her departure.

"Ah! Sidney," said she, fixing her

bewitching eyes tenderly on his face, "I dare not believe you. Wretched beyond the power of human relief; anxious to preserve the honour of my family and your good opinion, teach me to support this dreadful banishment from all I love. Oh! at a moment like the present, let me not suppose that I am worthy a sigh from you. Hate, despise, condemn, do any thing but pity me. My ruin is inevitable, if my loss could call one tear into those beloved eyes."

"Enchantress!" exclaimed the son of the Viscount, who at that instant saw only her ladyship, "why did you seduce me to assume a brother's gentle character, when every glance from those fascinating orbs brings to my recollection the still dear interviews of the root-house?"

"And do you indeed remember those hours of bliss?" inquired her ladyship, with thrilling softness. "Oh! Sidney, am I still dear to you? Can you, will you, when the immense ocean divides us, sometimes bestow a thought on one, who, in spite of

reason and duty, would fain live only for you?"

Sidneywas about to reply, when George Evelyn, who, with his bride, were returned from Scotland, passed, and tapping the son of the Viscount on the shoulder, said goodnaturedly:

"Beware, Fortescue, of infringing on the rights of an immortal: the god of love may punish the daring temerity of a son of earth, for holding a tête-à-tête with his adored."

Sidney arose, and with the lovely Psyche joined the company; but he could not shake off the power of her words, nor free himself from the magic of her looks. She quitted him, and, with her aunt, passed through the splendidly illuminated apartments of the Earl. Her eyes rested on the variegated lamps, which, in different places, formed the words: 'A tribute of affection.' "Am I worthy of it?" thought Lady Elvira. A pang of remorse shot through her heart; the sting was keen, but momentary: Sidney passed, and all but him vanished from her mind.

After supper, when the dances were again commenced with fresh spirit, Lady Elvira slipped unobserved to the chamber allotted for herself, and in a few minutes threw off the transparent drapery of Psyche, and put on that of a nun, wrapping herself in a long veil, which concealed her form and features. Trembling, and sick with doubt and expectation, Lady Elvira once more mixed among the crowd. Sidney was leaning against the door of the ball-room: he saw and wondered who she was. Her ladyship touched his arm, and motioned that he should follow her. Surprised, he quickened his pace, and entered one of the private apartments of the house. Closing the door, the mysterious stranger threw back her veil, and discovered to the wondering son of the Viscount Lady Elvira.

"What can this mean?" hastily demanded Sidney. "For what purpose are you thus attired?"

"To enjoy, unobserved, for the last time, half an hour's conversation."

"For the last time, Elvira!" said he, taking her hand: "and is this, indeed, the

last time I am to behold you?" His voice faultered, and he involuntarily passed his arm round her waist.

"Yes, dearest Sidney: soon will the Indies separate us; and you, oh! you, will too soon forget one whose sole comfort has been the dear privilege of seeing and conversing with you. Beloved Sidney! I have never before acknowledged the true reason of my conduct: it was regard for your peace; a wish to save you from a father's curse, that prompted me to rashly unite myself to another. Oh! then, pity and forgive the woman whose misery is caused by too much tenderness for you."

She leaned against his shoulder; her sobs subdued him: he felt the convulsive heavings of her bosom, and strained her passionately to his own.

"I do pity and forgive you still, dear Elvira, and could my death restore you to happiness, freely would I resign my life this instant. Oh! that you had been less considerate, less desirous to save me from my father's displeasure; then would you have ratified the vows made in the root-house of

the lake—then, Elvira, you would have been mine, and I, oh! heaven, should have been privileged to adore you."

She felt his tears on her cheek.

"Not then, as now, should I have been compelled to repress my passion, to check the exuberance of my feelings. Oh! Elvira, these tears proclaim thou art still beloved: yet fear not my honour: thou art safe, although within my arms, and pressed to my heart, which yet adores thee."

Lady Elvira was too much agitated to reply to him, and Sidney, affected beyond measure, conjured her to moderate her grief.

"You distract me," said he, "by the sight of your distress: for God sake! for my sake, dearest Elvira, compose yourself."

"Oh! Sidney," exclaimed her ladyship, raising her attractive eyes to his, "for your sake I would, indeed, do much. You tremble, Sidney; you affect to pity me; yet you offer no relief to my miseries."

"What would you have me say more than I have, expressive of my feelings, of my tenderness?"

"Say once again that I am dear to you," said she, half concealing her beautiful face in his bosom: "it is the last time my ears will ever be blessed by the sound."

Sidney convulsively pressed her to his bosom, and fixing his lips to her's, once more assured her of his regard, while his whole frame trembled with the tenderness of his situation. Lady Elvira placed his hand on her heart.

"Feel, Sidney, how it beats for you; and yet—yet you can consign it to eternal torture: you can give up this form, once so tenderly adored, without one effort to retain it."

"Heavens!" exclaimed Sidney; "how, dearest Elvira, can I shield you from pain? How can I exert a right which I do not possess?"

"I give you that right, dear Sidney; even now I will be your's: no cruel ocean shall divide us—Sidney, beloved, adored, let us fly to some remote corner of the globe, where, unknown and uncensured, we may live but for each other."

"What!" exclaimed the son of the Vis-

count, recovering instantaneously from the witchery of her seducing voice and syren form. "Have you deceived me, Elvira? While I believed you worthy my regard, I loved and pitied you: my heart readily excused your imprudence, but not your guilt. Oh! I have already injured my wife by listening to the voice of one who consigned me to all the torments of disappointed love. No, Elvira, I will not quit my gentle Julia, whose steady love, whose unremitting affection, alone preserved me from despair, when you had so capriciously abandoned me. Oh! that indeed my friendship, my advice, had wraught a change in thy heart. Farewell, Elvira: far better is it for our future peace that the ocean should divide us. Farewell, and forget a man whose happiness a second time you have nearly destroyed."

Not waiting her reply, he hastily quitted the apartment, and with a heart which severely reproached him for his recent infatuation, returned to the ball-room, leaving Lady Elvira in a state of mind bordering on distraction. She, however, quickly assum-

ed her first character, and without having been missed, re-entered the illuminated apartments of her uncle. Sidney just spoke to his brother, and quitted them, before the return of the dangerous beauty.

All that tenderness, which for awhile had lain dormant in the bosom of Sidney for his amiable Julia, was now awakened by the conviction that he had doubly injured her in wasting his time and thoughts on so worthless an object. Stealing softly to the apartment of Mrs. Fortescue, he crept towards the bed in which he imagined she was slumbering. A deep sigh escaped him as he bent over her, then closing the curtain, he flung himself in an easy chair by the fire-side.

Mrs. Fortescue only appeared to sleep, lest she should alarm the kindness of her husband; but the restless inquietude of her mind had kept her awake. She was conscious, from a variety of circumstances, that Sidney was again under the magic influence of the Earl's daughter; she was, however, also conscious that it would not

be lasting; yet she had experienced more apprehensions for him that night than usual, and felt a joy at his return which almost tempted her to betray her knowledge of his presence. Softly raising herself in bed, she discovered the melancholy attitude of her beloved husband; and dreading only lest he was unhappy, she hastily flung over her a loose morning gown, and was by his side before he was aware she had risen. Sidney, on perceiving his wife, started with an air of embarrassment, but the tender smile which dimpled her face reassured him.

"I thought you were asleep, my love. I fear I have disturbed you. Go to bed, my dear Julia; you will get a fresh cold."

"Not in your arms, my Sidney," said she, fondly throwing herself on his knee, and kissing his burning cheek. "I meant to inquire about the ball; but you are feverish and want rest."

"Indeed I do, my Julia; but I cannot go to bed yet."

"Oh! but you must, my beloved hus-

band: you will not deny your Julia's request. Come, dearest Sidney, it is late, and you are far from well."

"I am agitated, I confess, by the circumstances of to-night," replied he; "but what principally affects me is the consciousness that I have lately acted undeserving of your tenderness."

"Oh! say not so, my adored Sidney," said she, pressing her lips to his: "I will not hear a word to-night. I can guess at all you mean; but the heart of my generous Sidney cannot long remain enslaved."

Sidney cast an inquisitive look on his wife, who smiling sweetly on him, said:—

"I know that the worthless sister of Lady Angeline has done her utmost to seduce you from my arms; but I knew also, that however you might for a time be fascinated by her charms, you would never seriously destroy the peace of your Julia, never forsake her for another."

"Beloved Julia," exclaimed the penitent son of the Viscount, "I would not, indeed, abandon thee, though tempted by that dangerous syren. Oh! my wife, I

have, indeed, been deluded by her arts; I have been blinded by her specious appearance of virtue; and till this night, my soul, believing her to be unfortunate, but not criminal, felt for her the tenderest pity. To-night she threw off the mask she had so long and so carefully worn: she wound me up to a pitch of dangerous sympathy: thinking me sufficiently softened for her purpose, she conjured me to fly, to abandon thee, my sweet comforter, my friend, my wife. Then, Julia, the spell ceased: my pity, my compassion, my tenderness, turned to disgust. I quitted the beautiful, the imprudent dissembler, to lament in secret the failure of her plans. Beloved Julia, I own my guilt, my penitence; can you pardon my wanderings?"

Mrs. Fortescue shudderingly threw her arms round the neck of her husband, as if to be certain of his presence, then casting on him a look of unutterable fondness, she pressed him passionately to her bosom.

"Thank God! thank God!" she exclaimed, "that you were proof against her solicitations. Oh! my Sidney, my grati-

tude to heaven for returning you again to my arms, and to yourself, for thinking of me amidst so dangerous a trial, alone fills my heart. Yes, best beloved; thy Julia not only forgives thy late estrangement, but promises to cherish thee more fondly than ever. Dearest Sidney, it shall be my study to make you never lament the loss of that beautiful, but worthless woman."

Sidney folded her to his bosom in an ecstasy of grateful tenderness. "Dearest and best of women," he exclaimed, "my senses alone have been misled; my heart has ever been thine: thine only it can ever be. Henceforth, my beloved Julia, my conduct, not my words, shall convince you of my love. For the sake of that little angel I will conceal, even from my brother, the innate worthlessness of her sister, lest by the remotest hint she should discover what would be for ever fatal to her peace."

Again embracing his wife, Sidney, relieved in part from the weight of his own reproving conscience, retired to seek repose on the pure and innocent bosom of his Julia: nor did he perceive, by her

countenance in the morning, that she had listened the night before to the story of his errors. The grateful soul of Sidney felt this behaviour of his wife: deeply it sunk into his heart, and he resolved by the unremitting affection of his future life to atone for his recent neglect. He, however, found himself too unwell to quit his room, and rather rejoiced that he had so just an excuse of avoiding another interview with Lady Elvira.

Ignorant of what had passed, Lady Angeline vainly endeavoured to repress her distress, as the hour of separation drew near; and innocently imagined that the emotions of her sister proceeded from the same cause as her own. Accompanied by the Earl and the rest of the family, she saw her embark for the Asiatic coast, and as she sunk almost senseless in the arms of Lord Desmond, a melancholy presentiment filled her heart that their farewell was an eternal one. By degrees, however, she regained her tranquillity, and as it was now the middle of June, both families prepared to leave London.

The Earl, his son, and Lady Mary, with their infant blessing, proposed to spend a month at Dudley House, and the remainder of the season at De Courci Castle. His sister was desirous of returning to the venerable Lady Dorothea, and the Earl archly observed that it would be a pity to detain Lady Angeline from the spot she loved best.

"Thank you, dear uncle," said her ladyship, affectionately kissing his hand: "I confess I am particularly attached to the place where I have passed some of the happiest hours of my life." Then recollecting her beloved, her absent sister, she added:—"I could almost hope never again to quit its delightful retirement: I have now spent two winters in London, and am so little satisfied with them, that I shall rejoice if I can escape the penance of a third."

Lord De Courci smiled significantly on his blushing niece. "Henry," said he, "tell the Viscount, that out of regard to him, I suffer Angeline to return to the Castle before me. George and his bride

will bear us company to Dudley House. In a month, however, we shall see you again, and I only regret that Captain Evelyn will not be able to honour us with his presence."

"The loss, my lord, is mine," replied the melancholy brother of Lady Mary. "In a few days I shall join my ship, and expect to sail directly for the Mediterranean. Exiled from those dear friends, whose kindness has taught me that life is yet valuable, I shall however be consoled during my banishment by their affectionate correspondence. May I venture to hope that you, dear Lady Angeline, to whose sympathy and benevolence I am so highly indebted, will continue your kindness to a grateful wanderer, and sometimes add a postscript to my sister's letters?"

Most willingly she assured him that he might depend on receiving frequent tokens of her friendship, and Henry also promised that he would be a regular correspondent. With every mark of affectionate regard, each family took leave of this amiable and unfortunate young man, hoping that time,

and their own tender attentions, would yet restore him to that domestic happiness he seemed at present to have bid adieu to for ever.

The return of the Viscount's family to the Abbey afforded him infinite satisfaction, which was increased by the presence of the youngest niece of Lady Emma. With all a sister's tenderness she presented to Lord Fortescue a fine miniature of the fascinating Lady Elvira. The rich jewels that surrounded it could not add to the brilliancy of her large and witching eyes. A smile of conscious beauty animated her perfect features, and gave them an air of irresistible loveliness, while her dark hair, dressed in the Grecian costume, shewed the fine form of her head, the high and polished forehead, and the beautiful curve of her black eye-brows. The snowy bosom which contained the faithless heart of this dangerous syren was seen through the transparent lace which shaded, though it could not conceal it; and Lord Fortescue, as he eagerly ran over the captivating person of Lady Elvira, pronounced it faultless. Yet

the magical expression of the azure eye, as it reminded him of her father's, told him also, that with all her matchless perfections, she yet wanted the soft and permanent attractions of her lovely sister.

Again his eyes rested on the enchanting miniature of the Earl's daughter. "These," thought the Viscount, "were the matchless beauties which for awhile held captive the heart of my eldest son. It was the magic glance of these languishing blue eyes which nearly lured him to his ruin. Domestic tranquillity and connubial happiness fly from the circle of these voluptuous arms." Returning the picture to Lady Angeline, he nevertheless paid a just tribute to its perfections, while the glowing cheek of Sidney betrayed his inward reproaches, and reminded his wife of the fatal influence her ladyship once held over him.

Nothing now occurred to interrupt the sweet harmony of the once hostile families. The Earl, at the expiration of the month, returned to the Castle, and English hospitality again was found within its princely walls. Lady Mary's infant son became

more than ever the companion and pet of Lady Angeline, who carried him one morning to pay a visit to the Viscount. Opening the study door, she placed her godson on the ground, and told him to go to Lord Fortescue. The boy ran to the admiring Viscount, who catching him in his arms, tenderly caressed the namesake of his son. The little Henry, nevertheless, extended his hands towards his lovely relation, and as he half hid his face in her bosom, cast a timid glance towards the noble stranger.

To the youngest son of the Viscount he however fearlessly entrusted himself; and as his lordship witnessed the affection of Henry towards the child of Lord Reginald, his heart anxiously looked forward to the day, when, as a parent, he should see him lavishing his tenderness, and performing all the delightful duties of that sacred character.

Henry had paid every proper attention to the memory of his deceased wife, and Lord Fortescue, who grew more and more attached to Lady Angeline, now became desirous to have her under the same roof

with himself. The elegant mansion of Lord Desmond was ready for his reception, and though it was only a small distance from the Abbey, yet the removal of his daughter gave a pain to the Viscount which he felt could only be dissipated by the tender and dutiful attention of Lady Angeline.

One evening, after she had been amusing him with her musical talents, his lordship said, "My sweet girl, I see you prepare to leave me with a degree of uneasiness that renders me uncomfortable; and I only regain my cheerfulness as I reflect that the ensuing day will bring you again into my presence. How generous would it be of you, dear Angeline, if you would supply the place of Cecil, and take up your residence altogether at the Abbey. Come, Henry, and plead the cause of our united loves: tell my blushing favourite how dearly we all value her society, and how fondly we will cherish her if she will become one amongst us."

"Dear Angeline," said Mrs. Fortescue, "let not the Viscount ever be said

to plead in vain. As a sister, I have long loved you, and now join my entreaties, that you will increase the happiness of our family circle."

Sidney took her trembling hand in his, and kissing it affectionately, said, "No persuasion is requisite to induce our beloved Angeline to confirm the felicity of Henry, and of us all. Ever attentive to the wishes of those she loves, she will not now refuse to increase our domestic bliss by acceding to all our desires."

"Sanctioned by the consent of my revered father to our union, oh! Angeline, beloved, and ever adored, may thy Henry join in supplicating, that he may soon receive a legal right to the possession of this dear hand."

"Dearest Angeline," said the lovely wife of Lord Desmond, "to-morrow I shall leave the sacred residence of my beloved father for one of my own. Oh! then consent to fill up the vacuum my absence will occasion at the table, and in the heart of the Viscount."

"Cruel friends," exclaimed her lady-

ship, smiling sweetly through her tears, "I must fly from the power of so dangerous a confederacy against my freedom. Even the Viscount has leagued to enslave me."

Henry followed her with the rapidity of a lover. They crossed the wooden bridge to the Castle lawn: gently leading her to the spot where he had first owned the magic of her grateful voice, first felt the sweet touch of her soft white hand: "It is here, oh! Angeline," said he, "that my request should be granted; for it was here that my heart for the first time yielded to the powerful influence of love. Say, my dear Angeline, will you consent to ratify your promise—to become my wife, and the daughter of the Viscount?"

The moon shone full on the bashful countenance of Lady Angeline, and discovered to the enraptured son of the Viscount the timid tenderness which filled her heart. Trembling with the exquisite idea of becoming the wife of him she adored, the daughter of the Earl with difficulty pronounced the simple word which confirmed the bliss of her lover. Clasping

her with unutterable tenderness to his bosom, he exclaimed, "For ever sacred be this enchanting spot, where first my soul owned the passion of love, and where my Angeline consented to be mine, mine, dearest, for life. Oh! my own darling, my first, my only idol, what rapture have you now bestowed on your Henry. With unceasing fondness will I watch over you; with what ecstasy contribute to your happiness." Again pressing her to his bosom, he kissed off the tear of pleasure from her cheek, and conducted her to the Castle.

The Viscount expressed his desire that the nuptials of his favourite son, and the niece, and counterpart of Lady Emma, should be solemnized at the Abbey: this was also the wish of Lady Angeline and her lover. The Earl with his usual affability and courtesy consented. All the family, except the once betrothed wife of the Viscount, were present at the ceremony, which was performed in the private chapel of the Abbey. She, from motives of delicacy, declined obtruding herself on the notice of Lord Fortescue, but her affection-

ate niece, and her happy Henry, stole a few moments from the bridal party, and hastily crossing the lake, received her benediction, and that of the worthy Lady Dorothea.

"God bless you, my darling," said the latter, "you have gratified my earnest wish. Cherish her tenderly, Mr. Fortescue, for she is one of the most amiable of human beings."

No description can faithfully pourtray the universal joy this event occasioned. Robarts and his wife, with Alice Thomson, were almost wild with pleasure. "Ah!" cried the latter, "I thought it was her ladyship that broke Mr. Henry's myrtle. Well, thank God, I shall now die contented: the bridge is rebuilt, we are all friends again, and Lady Angeline will live at the Abbey, and make us all young again by her kindness and affability."

"And my dear master," cried Robarts, "will now enjoy the comforts of domestic happiness, for next to Lady Emma, I know he adores her niece. Oh, that our humble voices were capable of expressing our gra-

titude to the Almighty, who has thus mercifully brought about the reunion of the families."

A second time the younger son of the Viscount became a husband; but with what different sensations! The love which now animated his bosom was of the tenderest kind; the happiness of his future life was now confided to the woman of his choice, whose mind and manners so well accorded with his own, that he conceived his felicity as certain. With increased affection were the myrtles placed together on the study-table of Henry, and watched as usual by himself and Lady Angeline: but she could not return the volume of Petrarch, the possession of which had afforded her so much secret delight. Yet Henry was permitted to peruse it, and as he discovered the notes in the hand-writing of her ladyship, when she little imagined they would ever come within his notice, he found fresh cause for admiration of her virtues.

A few days after their marriage, the Viscount again led his lovely favourite into

his own apartment, and once more presented to her the rich jewels intended for her aunt.

"They are your's, my beloved daughter," said his lordship: "do not again refuse my request. You only are worthy of what was designed for that adorable, that matchless woman."

Unwilling to give pain to the Viscount by a second refusal, Lady Angeline accepted the splendid ornaments which had so long been hid within his cabinet. She pressed his hand affectionately, and said, "It shall be my constant study, my lord, to merit this excess of tenderness: it is my wish never to leave the delightful privacy of the Abbey, but to devote myself entirely to you, and to my husband."

Oh! name of ecstasy, comprising within itself all the dear relationships of father, brother, sister, friend. So thought lady Angeline Fortescue, as she pronounced the sacred, the adored name of husband; so thought Henry as he pressed his lips to her's, and articulated the sweet name of wife.

So dearly was Lady Angeline esteemed by all who knew her, that even the young Lady Desmond acknowledged that her happiness had been increased since she became her sister; and Henry had the rare bliss of knowing that time would only cement more firmly the love which his family felt towards her. Folding his arms around her light and graceful form, he tenderly embraced her as she discovered to him the valuable gift of his father.

"These baubles, my soul's idol, cannot affect thy constant mind. Our happiness, my Angeline, will be found within these venerable walls. Here will we enjoy the only true felicity on earth, domestic happiness. Here will our children first see the light; and here shall my dear father in the society of his favourite forget his own personal privations. Once more, my Angeline, you must encounter the unmeaning professions of the great world; once more must you appear at Court to be presented on our marriage. After that, my beloved, we will enjoy the sweet scenes around us so congenial to our tastes and

inclinations, and leave the bustle, confusion, and dissipation of fashionable life to those less blessed in each other than we are."

"I regret, my dear Henry," said she, "that even for a short time it is necessary we should again mix in scenes so ill suited to our dispositions. I yield, however, to circumstances, but hope that Cecil will kindly consent to accompany me."

The amiable wife of Lord Desmond immediately agreed to the wishes of her sister, and encouraged her by her presence to appear in her new character. Never had a more lovely or interesting bride been presented at Court than Lady Angeline Fortescue. If the manly and handsome person of her husband made her an object of envy, he was not less so in the possession of such a wife. The Marquis of Arlington, who, although engaged to Lady Lucy Aimhigh, had not perfectly recovered from his former passion, nevertheless, generously presented his hand to his more fortunate rival; and while his changeful countenance betrayed that she was still dear to

him, he yet congratulated him upon his felicity in terms of disinterested regard.

Lady Clementina coloured as she advanced to wish Lady Angeline joy, while the Duchess and Lady Lucy rallied her upon stealing away to the Abbey without giving them notice of what was to happen. "I must nevertheless have a dance," said her Grace, "and, since you propose quitting Town immediately, you must be content to enjoy a snug party to-morrow evening at my house. I will take no denial: who knows but what my constant prayers may have effected this happy reconciliation on all sides, as much as the powerful eloquence of Lady Desmond."

After ten days residence in Town, Henry and his beloved Angeline returned with increased delight to the retirement of the Abbey, and were welcomed with smiles of affection by the Viscount, Sidney, and Mrs. Fortescue: the latter soon contributed to the joys of their family circle by the birth of a daughter, who, with Henry De Courci, became the pet of Lady Angeline, nor was the humble namesake of her husband neg-

lected. Her ladyship had seen him frequently while she was in Town, and had placed him at a more eligible school. His mother, however, had expressed a wish to reside, if possible, near her benevolent benefactress, and Lady Angeline, with her usual goodness of heart, immediately complied with her request, and placed her in a neat cottage about a mile distant from the Abbey and Desmond Hall, to the inexpressible delight of Bessy and Peggy, while their brother Henry was consigned to the care of Robarts and his wife, who volunteered to instruct him; and as the boy, when he grew up, shewed an inclination to continue with them, and learn the farming business, Lady Angeline consented to his choosing that line of life, which gratitude more than inclination induced him to select.

Months of tranquil happiness, of endearing tenderness, passed rapidly away; even Sidney consented to pass his winter at the Abbey, nor seemed to have a wish ungratified, as he beheld the bliss of his brother, the delight of his father, and the content-

ment of his amiable Julia, who appeared doubly interesting while fulfilling the sweet duties of a nurse. Lord Desmond and his Cecil accompanied the Earl and his family to Grosvenor Square, where they were enlivened by the society of George Evelyn and his handsome wife. Summer, however, brought this amiable and happy family all back to the romantic beauties of the Castle, and Lady Angeline's fine eyes sparkled with rapture as she embraced the beloved sister of her husband, as she felt assured that she should enjoy the luxury of her conversation and kindness, until winter again called her to London.

Lady Mary De Courci had heard several times from her brother Francis: each letter afforded her fresh comfort, as they were written in a tranquil and resigned style, and expressed his thanks for the correspondence of his friends, which had contributed to enliven his spirits, and make him solicitous to live to return personally their goodness.

The silence of Lady Elvira and Mr. Wrottesley sensibly affected Lady Ange-

line, although she endeavoured to conceal it from the watchful tenderness of her husband. She had heard from them once, but that was far from being satisfactory: the letter from her ladyship was short and mysterious, while that of Mr. Wrottesley breathed, as usual, his affection and regard for the two families. He acknowledged that Lady Elvira still remained inconsolable for the loss of her relations and friends, and regretted most keenly accepting of a situation, however important it might be, which had so severely injured her peace of mind.

Sidney alone understood the cause of her dejection, and while he condemned her for thus yielding to a guilty passion, he could not avoid pitying the wretchedness he was now convinced she was suffering, and prayed most sincerely that Heaven would restore her to that tranquillity of mind he feared she had endangered beyond the power of human relief.

The next dispatches were such as proved the instability of this world's happiness, and called into action all the piety and for-

titude of Lady Angeline. One letter alone arrived from India; it was directed to the Earl, and came from Mr. Wrottesley. The black seal alarmed his lordship: hastily tearing open the cover, he read with surprise and indescribable anguish that his niece, his beloved, his beautiful Elvira, had fallen a victim to the climate of the east. A fever, brought on by continual fretting, had deprived this imprudent, but fascinating woman, of her existence, and she fell a martyr to her passions before she attained her twentieth year. Inconsolable for her loss, Mr. Wrottesley by the same dispatch sent in his resignation, and only waited to have it accepted, to return to his native country and his relations, whose kindness alone could enable him to bear up against the shock he had sustained.

Lord De Courci remained for some hours incapable of communicating the fatal intelligence to the family at the Abbey. The venerable Lady Dorothea tore her grey locks in an agony of despair, and the gentle sister of the Earl vainly endeavoured to soothe her distracted relative. In the midst

of their distress Henry appeared: alarmed by their looks, he eagerly inquired if they had received letters from India. None could reply to his question. Lord De Courci, in speechless misery, put into his hand the letter of Mr. Wrottesley.

Shocked by the intelligence of her sudden death, Henry had no words of consolation to offer to her afflicted family: dreading the effect it would have on his affectionate wife, and undetermined how to act, he returned greatly agitated to the Abbey. Sidney read in his expressive features that something had happened, and taking his arm, led him into the study. "Where is Angeline?" hastily inquired her husband: "it is for her I feel thus keenly." When hearing that she was busily employed in the nursery with Mrs. Fortescue, Henry disclosed the fatal news of the morning.

Sidney turned as pale as the marble statues which adorned the room. All the faults, all the imprudences of the once adored daughter of the Earl, were in a moment obliterated from his memory: he burst into an agony of tears, and almost suffocated by

his emotions, convulsively grasped the hand of his brother.

"It is I that have killed her," said he, striking his forehead with violence: "her fatal love for myself has destroyed her. Oh! Henry, even my wife would not deny these tears to the memory of that exquisite, that enchanting creature."

"Sidney, my beloved, my impetuous brother, all must lament the untimely death of Lady Elvira; but in your excessive anguish do not forget that you are a husband and a father."

"True, Henry; but you have yet to learn the undiminished tenderness of that dear unfortunate." As soon as he could gain breath, he hastily repeated to his brother all that had passed between him and her ladyship; and Henry shuddered to find that death had been the best friend of the beautiful Lady Elvira.

Quitting Sidney to perform the melancholy task of breaking it to his wife, Henry entered the nursery of his little niece, where he found the object of his solicitude occupied in caressing the child of his bro-

ther. Giving the infant Julia to her nurse, Lady Angeline took his hand, and hastily inquired if there was news from India. Henry, tenderly kissing her cheek, told her that the health of Lady Elvira had prevented her from writing; but the starting tear, which fell as he spoke, sufficiently betrayed what he wished as yet to conceal. Uttering a faint scream, Lady Angeline sunk on the bosom of her husband, insensible both to his tenderness and her own loss. Mrs. Fortescue, greatly shocked, assisted him to loosen her dress, and rub her temples: but ineffectual were their efforts, until Henry, in an agony of terror, clasped her to his bosom. A deep sigh announced returning respiration, and he uttered a cry of rapture as he perceived her languidly open her sweet eyes, and fix them on himself.

"Where am I?" said she, looking wildly around the apartment, and then on her trembling husband. "My Henry, what mean these tears? Oh! I remember—my sister, my Elvira is no more." Again she relapsed into insensibility, and Henry, by the advice of his father, who was now ap-

prised of what had happened, carried her to her chamber, where she was immediately put to bed; and the Viscount's carriage, with four horses, dispatched to Town for the first medical aid.

Affection gave additional speed to the movements of the servants, and they returned the same night with Sir Walter: Lady Angeline had, however, before his arrival become sensible of the deep affliction her illness had thrown both families into. Her first return to reason discovered Henry watching over her with agonizing fondness: the mother and wife of Lord Desmond, with Lady Mary, were sobbing by her bedside; while Mrs. Fortescue, who had been soothing the mind of her still agitated husband, now entered, and added her tears to those of the rest.

Lady Angeline gave her burning hand to Henry, and as she cast a look of gratitude on her surrounding friends, her heart, affected by the distress they testified, relieved itself by a violent burst of tears.

"Thank God!" exclaimed her aunt, "my beloved niece will now recover. Do

not, Henry, for the world, check her present sorrow."

Lady Angeline continued to weep with extreme violence, and felt, as her aunt had predicted, relieved by it. "Oh! my beloved Henry," said she, "I have been in such a frightful slumber: my head is so giddy: let me lean on your bosom: I shall be better within your arms."

Henry raised her gently, and seating himself by her side, fondly supported her as she had wished. The Earl, with his son and nephew, as well as the Viscount and Sidney, were anxiously expecting the arrival of Sir Walter; who, after he had seen his patient, assured them that he did not apprehend any danger, but that she must be kept as quiet as possible; and as she expressed a desire to have her husband and the young Lady Desmond with her, she ought to be gratified in her wish. It would be prudent, however, to keep the room free from other company.

The female part of the Earl's family accordingly withdrew, and contented themselves by sending frequently, during the

day, to inquire how she was. Each message brought them fresh comfort. Great had been the shock; but youth, a good constitution, and the unremitted tenderness of Henry and his sister, who never quitted her during a week's confinement to her bed, at length restored the gentle and grateful Lady Angeline to her fond relations. The Viscount, as soon as he was admitted to her chamber, embraced her in the tenderest manner, and assured her, that unless she took care of herself and got well soon, he should himself require all the skill of Sir Walter.

Affection for the Viscount and her family, but above all, her tender love for her husband, enabled Lady Angeline to recover from the severe shock she had received. She dreaded lest the health of Henry would fall a sacrifice to his constant attention on herself; and this idea principally encouraged and enabled her to exert all her strength of mind to resign herself to the loss of her beloved sister. In a fortnight's time she again rejoiced the hearts of the two families by her presence in the drawing-room,

and, as soon as Henry would permit, paid a visit to the Castle, to convince the worthy Lady Dorothea that she really existed.

When her ladyship was able to talk with composure on the melancholy subject of her sister's death, Henry thought it prudent to delicately assure her, that however heavy they might feel her loss, yet, as she still continued passionately attached to his brother, some consolation might be drawn from what at first seemed one of the greatest of all possible privations.

" Let us, therefore, submit, my beloved Angeline, to the wise dispensations of Providence, who, in calling to himself your too beautiful sister, has preserved her from a life of unavailing regrets; saved the worthy Everard from the black despair which a conviction of the estrangement of her heart would have occasioned; and my brother also, from proving ungrateful to the excellent and tender Julia. You weep, my innocent wife: Ah! you are not aware to what an excess of guilt and endless remorse this unfortunate passion might have

imperceptibly led Sidney and your sister; for it is useless to deny to you, my dearest Angeline, that my brother has never been able to forget the object of his first and fondest affections."

Lady Angeline trembled as she listened to the soothing voice of Henry, who affectionately wiped away her tears.

"Ah!" said she, "deeply as I feel her loss, it is yet better that my beloved Elvira should cease to exist, than have lived to disgrace her family by her imprudent conduct, and perhaps have estranged at last Sidney from his wife and child."

By degrees she became more resigned to her premature death, and awaited with tender solicitude the arrival of the miserable Everard.

He came, the shadow of what he once was, and by his presence renewed for a time her distress. In the society of the Abbey and the Castle, Mr. Wrottesley learnt to moderate his grief; and though he could never speak of Lady Elvira with composure, yet he began to enjoy the delightful scenes of domestic felicity which

surrounded him; and, in the course of four years after the death of Lady Elvira, bestowed his hand upon an amiable woman, distantly related to his family, whose entire love, and constant attention to his happiness, made him amends for the want of it in his first marriage.

Captain Francis Evelyn lived to be a witness also of the pure and uninterrupted bliss of the compassionate Lady Angeline. Yet could he never be brought to make a a second choice: his heart remained devoted to the memory of his adored Sophia, whose death he never ceased to lament, and whose name he never was able to pronounce without tears of undiminished affection.

Henry Fortescue, the beloved son of the Viscount, continues with his lovely wife to make the Abbey their principal residence; and every year increases the happiness of both father and son: the former feels a perfect conviction that his absolving his children from the effects of his rash vow was the means of ensuring their worldly felicity; and the latter, as he gazes on the

woman of his choice, as she tenderly fulfils the most sacred duties of a wife and mother, feels that happiness is yet an inmate of this earth.

Lord Desmond and his still adored Cecil pass their summers constantly at Desmond Hall; and here four of their children have been born and fondled on the knee of their grandfather; while the two boys of Lady Angeline, and one lovely girl, who promises to inherit all her mother's loveliness and virtues, goodnaturedly strive who first shall gain the envied kiss of the Viscount. The offspring of Sidney claim an equal share of his regard: nor are the young family at the Castle viewed with indifference. Both Lady Emma and the Viscount, as they behold the young heir of that noble house throw his arms round the graceful daughter of Lady Angeline, and kiss with boyish tenderness the tears from off her rosy cheek, seem to live over again the days of their childhood.

Several years have now elapsed since the death of the beautiful daughter of the Earl, yet her image, all perfect as it was,

will sometimes flit across the mind of Sidney. Tears of keen remembrance fill his eyes, and his heart alone receives consolation from the undeviating tenderness of his wife and the innocent prattle of his children; while, as the tall and beautifully proportioned figure of his eldest girl, the quick and bewitching glance of her sparkling blue eyes, meet the fond gaze of his own, his heart silently puts up a prayer to Heaven that she may at least possess all the steady affection and purity of mind and manners which so eminently distinguish her mother, and to which he is indebted for every comfort that he possesses.

THE END.

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